Tsuki Tsuki!

9

Yujin Goto
後藤祐迅
Illustration
梱枝りこ
Riko Korie

「C'MON, GET UP, SHINOBU-KUN.
IF YOU DON'T, I'LL USE FORCE.」
ALONG WITH HER WORDS, MY BODY WAS SHAKEN GREATER AND HIJIRI'S BOTTOM BOUNCED ON MY WAIST EVEN MORE.
WHEN I FAINTLY OPENED MY EYES, HIJIRI WAS SHAKING MY SHOULDERS WITH STILL STRADDLING ME AND HER VOLUMINOUS BREASTS BEWITCHINGLY MOVED UP AND DOWN.
SHE HERSELF MIGHT NOT BE AWARE OF IT, BUT FROM MY STANDPOINT, I COULD ALSO FEEL HOW SHE SHOOK HER HIPS ON TOP OF ME, WHICH WAS QUITE EROTIC.

REGARDLESS OF THEIR BIG SIZE, HER BREASTS HAD NOT A SHRED OF SLACKNESS AND UNDOUBTEDLY HAD A PLEASANT TENSION AND MAGNIFICENT ELASTICITY. BEAUTIFUL WHITE BREASTS THAT TRULY MADE YOU BELIEVE IT WERE PIECES OF ART.

「---CAN A HUMAN LIVE ON KNOWLEDGE ALONE?
I WANT TO FIND OUT.」
ELNI MADE AN UNBLINKING FACE, DROPPED HER GAZE
AND QUIETLY OPENED THE BOOK.
初めての本

Prologue

“I mean, you‘re the one I—“
Her usual dignified expression vanished and her eyes flickered with worry. Then flushing her smooth, white cheeks, Gogyou Hijiri softly grabbed the sleeve of my clothes.
A faint fragrance of flowers came from her glamorous, long hair and waiting for her to continue, I felt my own heart beating fast.
Afternoon of a certain holiday. I had gone to the Dojo of the Gogyou Mansion and conducted the exorcist training, which had become a routine lately, while Hijiri watched over me.
Amidst that, Hijiri had started talking with “I have something important to tell you” and while turning bright red, she chose her words with utmost care, slowly bringing her graceful features closer. Following, she firmly looked into my eyes and hesitated for a moment. Then she opened her well-formed lips.

“You’re the one I… love.”

Increasing the strength of her squeeze on my sleeve a bit,
“I want to be with you more often. I want to be closer to you. I want to be near you. I don’t want the engagement to be only a formality anymore…”
she confessed so with emotional words. With her eyes still filled with worry, Hijiri asked timidly.
“What about you, Shinobu-kun? How do you feel about me?”
“I…”
My confusion was so great that I was at a loss for words.
While I couldn’t think straight, my heart beat annoyingly loud and contrary to the welling up joy… the silhouette of a single girl floated in my head.
The smiling face of the girl I had promised to protect.
…I already might have partly known what to do.
But to me, Hijiri was the charming and precious girl I looked up to, so… the words I should be saying somehow didn’t come out of my mouth.

Just looking down and clenching my fists, I kept my mouth shut, whereupon Hijiri started talking calmly after a short silence.
"…You don't have to answer me now."
When I suddenly raised my head, Hijiri looked at me with her usual dignity in her eyes and showed a soft smile.
"I'll wait until you find your answer, Shinobu-kun. It was rather sudden anyway, so take your time. And I'll continue to work hard, so that you'll be mindful of me."
Saying so, Hijiri broadened her smile, as to hide her worry.
Her smile was really pretty and a bit dazzling.
…Would she still smile at me like that when I had found my answer?
The moment I voiced out my feelings, I felt that a single word would destroy our relationship so far. The feeling I embraced at that time was…

Chapter 01: Missing Answer

Getting deeper into fall with the end of the sports festival, it was at last a chilly morning.
In my slumber I suddenly felt a pleasant weight on my body along with a soft warmth and a faint fragrance of flowers. A somewhat bashful voice came from above my head.
"Sh- Shinobu-kun, it's morning. About time you get up."
…Mh? Shinobu-kun?
Different from the usual beautiful and clear voice, it was a gentle and mild tone.
When I opened my heavy eyelids doubtful, my vision was filled with the morning sun and also a cool beauty. Clear eyes with long eyelashes and a smooth bridge of the nose, this girl was without doubt Hijiri… but why was she in my room?
Daring enough, she sat straddling on my waist while her plump bottom pressed onto my body. But I had no time to enjoy the sensation of these

round hips and was perplexed, whereas Hijiri showed a bright grin.
“Morning, Shinobu-kun. Let’s go to school together today.”
“…Ah, a dream?”
“Ehm, Shinobu-kun? This isn’t a dream, you know?”
“Mh, taking this isn’t a dream, what are you doing here then? It kind of looks like you’re attacking me in my sleep.”
“Ehh!? Really? I was just told by Kaoru-san that boys like to be waked up like this, so I asked Luna-san and came here, but— hey, don’t fall asleep in the middle of my explanation, Shinobu-kun!”
Somehow Hijiri’s troubled voice reached my ears, but not hearing most of it, I rested my cheek on the pillow.
Hijiri was popular at school with even a rumoured fan club. She could be called a school idol and was always dignified, so it was really unbelievable that she would wake me up in the morning in such a vulnerable astraddle position. Besides, it was Luna, who came into my room every morning.
…This must be a dream.
My half-asleep brain came to this conclusion and I wanted to return to my slumber again, but
“Ah, your sleeping face is so cute… No, wait. Shinobu-kun, if you don’t get up, you won’t have any time to eat breakfast.”
I heard such a gentle voice, then my body was shaken lightly while at the same time I felt a squishy springiness around my waist, stronger than before.
I- It must be Hijiri’s bottom.
Every time she moved her body, her plump and elastic hips bounced on my waist, stimulating my body with the soft flesh.
“C’mon, get up, Shinobu-kun. If you don’t, I’ll use force.”
Along with her words, my body was shaken greater and Hijiri’s bottom bounced on my waist even more. When I faintly opened my eyes, Hijiri was shaking my shoulders with still straddling me and her voluminous breasts bewitchingly moved up and down. She herself might not be aware of it, but from my standpoint, I could also feel how she shook her hips on top of me, which was quite erotic.
“Uhm, Shinobu-kun, if you don’t wake up… I, I’ll kiss you.”

“Bring it on. Do what you want.”
“R- Really? Then I won’t hold back.”
“I don’t mind. It’s a dream anyway.”
I replied composed and closed my eyes once more, but… wasn’t somewhat weird?
The warmth of Hijiri’s hand on my shoulders. Her soft and pleasant bottom on my waist. Her voice coming from above my head. For a dream, it was pretty realistic.
“Mhm~ are you still half-asleep, Shinobu-kun? Or are you joking around like usual? I don’t really know, but if you don’t get up… I’ll really kiss you.”
“I’m always serious. And at inconvenient times, I crack a… wait, stop!”
A kiss was definitely going too far. Returning to my senses from a half-asleep state, I pushed aside my sleepiness and jumped up, whereupon a small “Kyaa” scream raised and following my vision was filled fascinating black panties.
…A- Apparently I did something outrageous in my half-asleep state.
Because I had straightened up my upper body with attitude, Hijiri had lost her balance and with both her hands to the back, she had gotten in a posture, where she spread her legs like the letter M.
Widely spreading her beautiful legs clad in stockings, her bewitching thighs and even her crotch were exposed before my eyes, giving a good view on her black underwear.
Truly a lascivious pose.
When I thoughtlessly stared, Hijiri seemingly noticed her own posture as well. Turning bright red in no time, she quickly averted her eyes from me, whereas I lowered my head with attitude.
“Sorry, Hijiri. I was still half-asleep.”
“Y- Yeah, I know you didn’t do it on purpose, so it’s okay. And you don’t need to apologize. If you want to look… go ahead and look some more.”
“…Eh?”
When I raised my words on the unexpected words, Hijiri flushed her cheeks even more still spreading her legs like a M and continued with a small voice.

“If it pleases you, I’m happy. If there’s anything else you want me to do, just so say without reservation…”
Contrary to her soft tone, Hijiri tightly closed both her eyes and turned bright red due to shame.
At this rate she might listen to all my demands. Yes, for example… wait, not good. It was rude to have weird fantasy.
To get my slowly awakening brain into gears, I lightly slapped my cheeks and repeated to take deep breathes… then the door of my room opened with the worst timing ever.
“Hijiri-san, is Shinobu-san awake yet?”
Along with a gentle voice, a girl of dazzling beauty came into the room. Long, blonde hair that emitted a graceful brilliance. Clear, emerald-green eyes. A slender waist and an overwhelming bust, which prided itself with a top class size even amongst my acquaintances.
The girl with the charming figure and full-bodied fruits, was our reliable older sister, who surprisingly loved physical contact: Luna. Unfitting to her neat and clean aura, she was a devil, but I myself wasn’t bothered by it.
But well, that aside. The problem was the current situation.
Hijiri was spreading both her legs on the bed while flushing her cheeks. And I stared at that.
For a bystander, it might look like I was doing something indecent to Hijiri.

Then Luna seemed to jump to conclusions, as tears filled her eyes and she trembled her voice.
"…Could it be, I am interrupting?"
"N- No, Luna-san! Don't get the wrong idea!"
To clear up the misunderstanding, Hijiri fixed her seating position and hastily shook her hands.
"But Shinobu-san is doing something perverted to—"
"That's not it! Shinobu-kun hasn't done anything! To begin with, I think it was my fault for telling the half-asleep Shinobu-kun that I would kiss him if he doesn't get up."
"Uhm, I do not quite follow, but you got into that position on your own…?"
"No, no, that's not it either, Luna-san."
It seemed Hijiri was quite agitated. So I made a follow-up.
"I caused Hijiri to spread her legs like a M. It's my fault."
"Y- You are at fault, Shinobu-san? Then, does it mean, you asked Hijiri-san to take a perverted pose for you?"
"…Rather than a ask, it was more by force."
"By force!?"
"Yeah, I really wronged Hijiri."
But it was an accident— Before I could explain so, Luna lightly puffed up her cheeks and protested with teary eyes.
"You are so mean, Shinobu-san! I am the one who always wakes you up! Why do you only do something like that when it is Hijiri-san!"
Temporarily stopping her words, Luna raised her voice with still teary eyes.
"It is not fair to leave me alone out of the loop!"
…So- Somehow, the point she got angry about was slightly off?
When I had that impression, Luna flushed her cheeks and continued.
"I understand that you become unable to hold back on various things, Shinobu-san, seeing as you are a boy. But at that time, please come to me! It is not fair that it is just Hijiri-san! If you would just ask me, even I, well, will try my best to take a perverted pose!"
"—Then immediately take off your clothes, raise up your beautiful huge breasts, take them into your own mouth and show off how you lewdly

suck on them."
"Ehh!? I get the feelings that is more demanding than what Hijiri-san did, but if that is what you wish for, Shinobu-san… wait, now that I think about, that was not Shinobu-san's voice!"
Yeah, exactly. It wasn't said by me.
It was the voice of a third party, who had suddenly butted in with an imitation of me. When I swiftly shifted away my gaze from Luna, who had put her hands onto her clothes, I saw a girl wearing maid clothes coming into the room.
Smooth white skin. Amber eyes and a perfectly proportioned figure on a slender body.
Still the eye-catching beauty as ever, she was the Gogyou Household's maid and Hijiri's *older sister*— Kaorun aka *Gogyou* Kaoru.
She must have imitated me… but why was even Kaorun here besides Hijiri? Inadvertently I forgot to retort and tilted my head, whereupon Kaorun was perplexed for some reason.
"Ehm, Shinobu-sama? Were is your usual sharp, yet lovely retort? More importantly, what is the ruckus so early in the morning about? Did something—"
"Please listen to it, Kaoru-san!"
Cutting into Kaorun's words, Luan grabbed the sleeve of her clothes tightly.
"Shinobu-san would just not get up! So I came to check upon him! And then Hijiri-san was taking a perverted pose in front of him!"
"…Incidentally, what kind of pose was it?"
"She spread her legs like a M!"
When Luna answered so instantly, Kaorun sparkled her eyes, then softly rested her hands on Luna's shoulders and made her tone a bit gentler.
"It seems you are tired, Luna-san. You must have seen an illusion. Certainly I recommended Hijiri-chan to wake up Shinobu-sama in an astraddle position. But please think about it. Do you believe the usually composed Hijiri-chan would wake up Shinobu-sama by spreading her legs like a M?"
"No, that is not it, Shinobu-san forcefully…"
"Shinobu-sama did? I cannot believe that. Shinobu-sama is a wussy—

No, I mean, he has resistant rationality, irritatingly so. I did not see the actual happening, so I cannot say it with confidence, but was it not just an accident?"
When Kaorun replied without screwing around on a rare occasion, Hijiri nodded firmly in confirmation.
"Just as Kaoru-san says. It's not like Shinobu-kun tried to do anything funny…"
There Hijiri got off the bed and told Luna the circumstances. Meanwhile I whispered into the ear of Kaorun, who had approached me.
"Thanks. You really saved my ass there, since Luna seemed to have the wrong idea."
"I know, right? I really had to hold myself back there from fooling around. Please praise me more."
"Well, that aside, did you call me a 'wussy' earlier?"
"Yes, I did. However, even as a wussy, you are adorable, Shinobu-sama. More importantly, please praise me already. I hope you will pet my head."
"I'm afraid, that request is rejected."
"…Is that so. Still, you are fantastic again today, Shinobu-sama. So cool."
"It's too late to flatter me now— wait, don't be so downhearted. Just how bad did you want a pet on the head?"
Actually, didn't she show even more expressions lately?
Involuntarily considering it cute, I softly reached out my hand for Kaorun's head, but midway I suddenly felt something amiss and stared into her face.
Upon that, Kaorun reddened her cheeks for some reason.
"Shinobu-sama, even if you do not look at me with such perverted eyes, I will return your love unconditionally, unlimited and free of charge."
"Well, I would love to retort that you need your eyes checked, but… didn't you stop with the 'Shinobu-sama' stuff?"
Realizing what I felt amiss, I looked into Kaorun's eyes.
Despite her appearance, Kaorun was a hybrid devil. Ever since she could remember, she was treated as a tool at the exorcist organisation and had hard a hard time acting spoiled towards someone.

But she must haven opened up a lot.
Right now she was walking besides Hijiri, who tried to change the exorcist organisation, and she should have already refrained from adding -sama to the names of people at least close to her. In reality, she was calling Luna with -san.
"…Hey Kaorun, I told you before, you don't need to add 'sama' to my name."
Softening my tone a bit, I gently petted Kaorun's head, but she lightly shook her head and replied.
"I appreciate the thought, but in the future you could become my Master. The honorific seems appropriate for me, so please let me call you like that."
"…Wait a sec. What you mean future Master? I have no plans to become your Master. I always want to stay on equal terms with you, since I don't like to appoint superior and inferior in human relations."
"Then I do not mind it if you are my Master in name only. Please consider it that kind of play and enjoy it."
I had been quite serious, yet Kaorun took it with in a casual mood.
"Also, Shinobu-sama, if you insist that you do not want to be called with sama, then I will call you 'Darling' from today on. Are you fine with that?"
"I don't really mind. Sounds fun."
"An unexpected interest!?"
When I replied this time by screwing around, Kaorun widened her eyes, then flushed her cheeks faintly.
"Uhm, Shinobu-sama, I know I brought it up myself, but 'Darling' is too embarrassing after all. If possible, could you choose between 'Master' and 'Dear Brother'?"
"Hey, don't strike the crucial 'Shinobu-sama' off from the choices. Besides I was only joking. Don't take me serious. Just keep calling me how you always have…"
Replying so with a light shrug of my shoulders, I casually looked at the other girls, whereu Luna squeezed herself sorrily with "I am sorry. I misunderstood".
Hijiri must have cleared up the misunderstanding. I made a sigh of relief

and returned my gaze to Kaorun, changing the topic as I suddenly noticed something.
“That aside, why are you both here today in the morning?”
When I asked doubtful at this late point, Kaorun replied with a small smile.
“Actually I wanted to surprise you, so on my suggestion, I came over together with Hijiri-chan. It is a plan to make your heart skip a beat by waking you up like a childhood friend.”
“…I see.”
To be honest, it didn’t really felt like a childhood friend, but it must have been Hijiri’s own way of approach. And stuff like this morning might continue from now on. Giving Kaorun an agreeable response and crossing my arms, I looked up to the ceiling… deeply thinking back upon.
The confession from Hijiri the other day. How I didn’t have an answer yet. And my relationship with Hijiri.
Even while I knew that it couldn’t continue like this, our current relationship was just too comfortable to me, so I kept putting off the *answer I should already know*… and still hadn’t come to a solution yet.
At that time, to drag my thoughts back to reality, Kaorun peered into my face and showed me a roguish smile.
“What do you say, Shinobu-sama? You were indeed surprised from having Hijiri-chan waking you up, right?”
“…Yeah, I was. I thought my legs would give in.”
When I cracked a joke to hide my emotions at once, Kaorun frowned a bit for some reason.
“That sounds a bit perverted.”
“Just what about it does!? Isn’t it your brain what’s erotic?”
“Muh, that is not the case. If you are doubtful, shall we have Luna-san say the same remark as a test? There you have it, Luna-san. Please say it with a deep sigh. Laying face-down on the bed would be even better.”
When Kaorun brought up the matter to Luna while turning around, Luna, who had watched over us with Hijiri, made a wry smile in confusion.
“Uhm, why are you asking me? If possible, I would like to decline…”

“Luna-san, if you listen to my request, I will present you with a picture of Shinobu-sama’s sleeping face. Besides, I believe it will please Shinobu-sama.”
When Kaorun replied so somewhat joking, surprisingly not Luna, but Hijiri blushed and raised her hand reserved.
“Ehm, Luna-san seems hesitant, so I could do it in her stead…”
“Aww! Not fair, Hijiri-san! Please do not get on the bed! I also want Shinobu-san’s pictures!”
Luna extended her foot towards the bed in opposition to Hijiri. On the other hand Kaorun put our her palm, as to stop them.
“Please wait, you two. Quarrelling is not good. How about I respond to Shinobu-sama’s expectations as a compromise between you two?”
“…Hey, how did it come to that? Besides, I aren’t expecting anything. Actually, don’t fool around so much in the morning.”
Retorting half-wearily, I thought in the corner of my heart.
That the wish of having these fun and lively times continue on forever unchanged was surely just my egoism…

After that I finished dressing up and eating breakfast, then I walked through the residential area on my way to school while being sent off by Luna and Kaorun. Next to me was Hijiri, but also two other girls.
One of them was Machina Liebelei Orangelo, who was in charge of getting tricked and then retorting. She was Luna’s little stepsister and a hybrid devil despite her appearance.
Long, elegant and glamorous red hair. Amber almond eyes that showed her willpower. Her two voluminous breasts and long, beautiful legs that even overshadowed a gravure idol were a feast for the eyes.
And the other girl was my little sister, Nanjou Nazuna.
With features that reminded you of an adorable kitten, Nazuna was a 8th grader and became the captain of the karate club the other day… but was she properly keeping her club members in check?
Making a nonchalant smile, Nazuna hummed a strange tune. Watching my sister, whose image was far away from being a captain, with a side-glance, I asked partly fooling around.
“I gotta say, you’re so energetic again today. Technically you’re in a

sensitive age. Don't you have a worry or two?"
"A worry? Mmh~ That it gotten colder lately, I guess…?"
"Yeah, you can't stand the cold after all."
Reminded me, every year in winter, Nazuna often rolled up with our cat at home under the heated table. When I put my retort on hold and was reminiscent about that time, Machina, who had listened in to us, interjected slightly worried.
"Hey Nazuna, you really don't have any worries? You said the proficiency test is soon, right? Is your studying coming along well?"
"…Somehow, I suddenly got the tension from a Monday morning."
As she had completely forgotten about the test until now, Nazuna dropped her shoulders dejected.
Well, you reap what you sow. I leaked a wry smile and lightly rebuked Nazuna.
"Aren't you tense because you only keep playing around? How about you properly review and prepare for class from now on like I do? I think that will make things easier."
"But Brother, facing troubles in your youth helps you grow."
"That's strangely fitting…"
However, next year Nazuna would prepare for entrance exams, so I should help her with her studies next time.
Such thoughts crossed my mind, whereas Hijiri, who had quietly observed so far, showed a soft smile and softly rested a hand on Nazuna's shoulder.
"Nazuna-chan, if you like, I can help you with your studies."
"…Really?"
"Of course. Let's have Kaoru-san help you as well on this occasion, not just me. Kaoru-san is good at teaching, so let's study with three of us next time."
"Yeah! Thanks, Hijiri-oneechan! And after studying, let's play together!"
"Uhm, Nazuna-chan, let's leave the playing for after the test, okay?"
Making a faint wry smile, Hijiri petted Nazuna's head. Nazuna tightly clung to her. And for some reason, Machina grabbed the sleeve of my clothes with a bitter expression.

“…Shinobu, Hijiri said all that what I wanted to say.”
“What you wanted to say? You mean ‘playing after the test’?”
“Yep, yep, Nazuna often plays with Elni, but not so often with me— wait, no! I mean about helping her study!”
She might have brought up the proficiency test, because she wanted to suggest that.
Surely Machina wanted to play the older sister in front of Nazuna.
Staring at Hijiri and Nazuna, she once more made a bitter expression.
“Somehow, Nazuna is quite attached to Hijiri. She calls me ‘Machina-chan’, but Hijiri with ‘Hijiri-oneechan’…”
“Jealous? Then why don’t you ask Nazuna to call you with ‘oneechan’ as well? I’m sure Nazuna will agree. If you’re too embarrassed to ask her yourself, I instead will— call you ‘neechan’.”
“…Really?”
“Of course. Let’s have Kaorun join in as well on this occasion, not just me. We two will call you ‘Neechan’.”
“Yeah! Thanks, Shinobu— is certainly not what I’ll say! How did it turn into that!? Go ask Nazuna in my stead! Besides, I don’t want you to be the little brother, Kaoru the little sister and I the older sister! You’re always so useless, Shinobu!”
“Not always. But doesn’t my level of uselessness tickle your motherly instincts… Machina-neechan?”
“Well, it’s a bit cute— wait, you casually changed your way of calling me! It’s embarrassing, so stop it!”
“…Would you have preferred Big Sis?”
“Even worse!”
Mhm, apparently she didn’t like it. I crossed my arm and pondered for a few seconds, then I clapped my hands and cracked a joke.
“Okay, then I’ll become your older brother now.”
“I, I don’t get at all how it turns into that…”
“Well, you know, if you become my little sister, you naturally will become Nazuna’s older sister. Then Nazuna might call you with ‘oneechan’ as well. Want to try it? If it makes Nazuna consider you as an older sister, it’ll be perfect.”
“…You have a point. Okay, I’ll try it.”

No, no, not the slightest bit of it was convincing.
While I retorted so in my heart, Machina seemed motivated and cleared her throat with a single cough. Faintly blushing, she looked at me with upturned eyes.
“Ehm, come shopping with me next time, Shinobu-oniisama.”
N- Not good. It was more effective than I had imagined. If Machina were my little sister, I might coddle her like a cat.
“Mh? What’s the matter, Shinobu-oniisama? Your face is kind of red… could it be, you’re embarrassed?”
“…Lil Sis, even if it’s your beloved brother, don’t go reading other people’s hearts.”
“Eh? You really are embarrassed? Th- Then I wouldn’t mind calling you ‘Shinobu-oniisama’ all day today.”
Machina was in a good mood. In regards to that, Nazuna, who watched over us, got worried with “…Machina-chan might have become my rival” and Hijiri got a weird misunderstanding with “So Shinobu-kun has a thing for that…”.
While watching the two of them at the corner of my vision, I decided to stop with the jokes already.
“Hey Machina, let’s put an end to this play now, okay? I’m scared that Elni or Kaorun might fool around by imitating you.”
“Right… wait, you just said ‘play’! You tricked me again! Stupid Shinobu!”
“…I’m not stupid. But doesn’t my stupidity tickle your motherly instincts— Aw, ouch! I apologize, so stop pulling on my ear.”
While talking like that, we then parted with Nazuna at the usual place and when I headed for school side by side with Machina and Hijiri, suddenly a cold wind blew and I shivered my body a bit.
…Just like Nazuna had said, it really had become cold.
Getting up in the morning would get harder from now on. When I shivered my body once more, Hijiri reserved took my arm for no apparent reason and instantly a squishy elasticity touched my elbow.
It were Hijiri’s soft and full voluminous breasts.
They pressed onto my body with a particular touch, which wasn’t too close, neither too shallow. Moreover Hijiri tightly clung to me after a

short hesitation and my arm was pinched between her two plump swellings. This sensation was irresistible.
While my heartbeat accelerated, Hijiri flushed her cheeks and looked at me sneaking.
“Uhm, I think you won’t be cold like this. What do you say… Shinobu-oniisan?”
Influenced by Machina earlier, Hijiri bashful changed her way of calling me.
“…Hijiri, enough of that. I’m bored of the little sister play.”
“You’re already bored of it!? Even though you looked like you enjoyed it…”
“Sorry, I’m at an age where I easily get passionate and easily get bored.”
Even while I cracked such a joke, my cheeks were actually quite hot.
When I quickly averted my eyes from her, Machina grabbed my arm with attitude for some reason in opposition to Hijiri.
Instantly, now plenty voluminous breasts pressed squishy onto my body.
Machina’s round, warm and soft breasts full of elasticity. They pressed onto my arm stronger than Hijiri’s and while my cheeks got even hotter, Machina frowned and faced Hijiri.
“…You’re so obstinate, Hijiri. Again with the known seduction?”
The seduction Machina was speaking of most likely meant the yin-yang technique.
The bedchamber skill that increased one’s power by combining the yin energy of a woman with the yang energy of a man.
That skill required to do perverted things and Hijiri previously used all opportunities to seduce me, so that she could increase her power with the skill.
But now that I thought about it, all these seduction might have just been done to get closer to me. On Machina’s question, Hijiri replied with a clear negation and still red cheeks.
“Machina-san, this isn’t seduction. It’s not related to the yin-yang technique. I love Shinobu-kun, so I’m doing this.”
“You love Shinobu? That’s not really anything new… wait, Ehh!? What the! You already confessed!?”
After widened her eyes, Machina went all dewy-eyed for some reason

and clung to me even stronger.
“H- Hijiri, shouldn’t you reconsider? Falling for Shinobu surely brings hardships. You know, how should I say, he’s a playboy and has an evil look.”
“Still, he’s the right one. He certainly has an evil look, but on a closer look you can tell that he has a kind face. At times he even makes a really cute face.”
“Th- That’s true, but he’s always telling strange jokes, isn’t he?”
“Yeah, Kaoru-san also complained that he immediately distracts with a joke to hide his embarrassment. But I don’t think that’s all. Because he looks slightly scary, I think he’s working hard to soften the atmosphere with jokes, so that people aren’t afraid of him.”
“Is that so? I didn’t know…”
…Neither did I.
I wanted to crack that as a joke, but I just wasn’t capable to.
Hijiri and Machina’s sweet fragrance and soft warmth agitated me. I was also concerned about the cold glares by-passers gave me for a while now. I should give them a piece of advice at this point, but it just wasn’t the right atmosphere to interject.
But well, after a while they surely would calm down.

I was optimistic as such, but while the number of students naturally increased as we approached the school gate, Hijiri and Machina were still clinging to me and continued their quarrel.
All gazes around us were focussed on us.
All these looks, alike to jealousy and killing intent, directed at me hurt a bit. That said, it might only be natural, since both Hijiri and Machina were popular at school with boys and girls alike.
But, I wished they stopped already. As they didn't notice the looks around us, they faintly raised the volumes of their voice while still clinging to each my arms.
"You're right, Hijiri, Shinobu has good parts. But he often does sexual harassment, you know? He touched my breasts or bottom numerous times. Are you fine with being sexual harassed, Hijiri?"
"Shinobu-kun isn't someone that would do sexual harassment on purpose. Besides, if it's him, I would forgive anything. If that's what he wants, then well, I'm happy as well…"
"F- Forgive anything… Why are you so daring! You really are a sullen pervert!"
"I, I'm not a sullen pervert! It's only for Shinobu-kun! I won't say that to someone else!"
In spite of being at the school gate, Machina and Hijiri were in a heated debate. While they were doing so, finally girls, who seemed to be juniors, approached us.
A fan of Hijiri? All of them fiercely glared at me and for starters, I called out reserved.
"Ehm, need something?"
"Hii! I, I'm not scared or anything!"
"Y- Yeah! We won't yield to threats!"
"We'll protect Gogyou-senpai!"
Contrary to their words, the girls trembled her legs in a frightened state. Somehow I couldn't stand watching that. I felt bad for scaring them, so I made an awkward smile, but
"Y- Yakuza! Murderer! Devil!"
"It's impossible for us after all!"
"…S- Sorry! We got carried away!"

Showing tears in their eyes, the girls quickly ran away without time to stop them.
That reaction was quite hurtful. I dropped my shoulders a bit and while Hijiri and Machina finally ended their quarrel, now a familiar girl approached me.
She was my classmate and childhood friend, Minami Ouka.
Adorable, big eyes. Light crimsons lips that reminded you of petals. Huge breasts that were rumoured to be F-cup and greatly bounced on her every step to emphasise their existence. When I unintentionally was about to follow these movements with my eyes,
“Morning, Shinobu-chan~”
Along with her greeting, Minami made a small jump. And like that, she clung to me.
Upon that, her plentiful voluminous breasts came into contact with my face and I felt an indescribable softness on both my cheeks… but I couldn’t breathe like this. While I struggled for oxygen, Minami clung to me even stronger and Machina gave her a warning right away.
“H- Hey, why are even you clinging to Shinobu. Hurry up and get away from him.”
“Eh, if you’re clinging to him, let me in too. It’s physical contact between friends. Besides, you know, Shinobu-chan likes it. For a while now, he’s wildly rubbing his face onto my breasts… It feels kind of nice…”
“Uhm, Minami-san? Take a closer look. Shinobu-kun looks somewhat in pain…”
I heard Hijiri’s rebuking voice, then the ruckus around us grew ever louder, as even Minami was clinging to me now.
“Nanjou-kun surely is doing something incredible in front of the school gate.” “Nothing less from Nanjou. He calmly does what we can’t do.”
“Fascinating, I’m in awe” “So envious. I also want to hug onto Nanjou-kun when he cross-dresses!”
Such carefree voices from people I believed to be my classmates reached my ears, but it was only for a few seconds. The larger part of the students
“Not only does he have Gogyou-senpai and Orangelo-senpai cling to

him, he's even making out with that big-breasted senior…!"
"Unforgivable." "I'll curse him! 24/7!" "No, just cursing him is too half-hearted. Let's tear him to pieces right here."
were in a rampant state like that. When I somehow pushed off Minami…
I could recognize a couple of girls, from the Kendo club?, slowly approaching me with bamboo blades in their hands in my vision. They all showed an ominous smile.
…How should I explain this?
I didn't like to resolve things with strength, neither against boys or girls.
While I pondered with my arms crossed, Hijiri took a step forward and calmly opened her mouth.
"Wait, girls. Please calm down a bit. Put away your bamboo blades."
"B- But, Gogyou-senpai, that delinquent—"
"Shinobu-kun isn't a delinquent."
Cutting into the girl's voice, Hijiri said with a strong tone.
"Shinobu-kun is precious to me. I'm happy that you're worried about me, but don't talk bad about him. I don't want him to be hurt."
On a rare occasion, Hijiri had an angry way of speaking. The nearby girls replied with silence. Was this the so called silence before the storm?
While I broke out in a mental cold sweat, Hijiri gently took my hand with "Let's go, Shinobu-kun" and started to walk. A short time later, "Wh- What does she mean with precious!?" "D- Don't tell me, Gogyou-senpai is in love with this villain-faced guy!?" "Calm down, girls! I'm sure Gogyou-senpai was tamed by that guy in body and heart." "Wh- What are you saying! You're the one who has to calm down!"
The voices of the students making a ruckus like that echoed around…

* * *

Class went on like always, getting into lunch break like that. After taking care of my *affairs*, I returned to the classroom and sat down on my chair, whereupon Machina next to me called out to me a bit worried.
"Welcome back, Shinobu. What did the junior girls say?"
"Who knows. It only sounded like screams to me."

Replying so while taking out my lunch box from my bag, I made a small sigh in my heart.
Truth be told, due to the incident this morning, I was called out every break with “We have to talk about Gogyou-san” by either letter or messenger and went to meet unfamiliar students, but everyone of them ran away in a frightened sate upon seeing my face.
How rude could they get?
However, I was used to such reactions, so it didn’t bother me too much and I opened the lid of my lunch box while humming, whereupon Machina said with a slightly astonished tone.
“Hey Shinobu, Hijiri is popular at school, so you better don’t provoke her fans too much. You said they screamed… Just what did you do?”
“I didn’t really do anything. Nor do I intent to provoke them. I just tried to smile. And then they ran away. Well when you’re so rocking like me, your existence alone is enough of a provocation… wait, why are you suddenly petting my head?”
I was fooling around, so I wanted her to retort, but Machina was probably comforting me. So I didn’t resist in particular and while I was petted, I saw Hijiri softly getting away from the circle of classmates surrounding her and approaching me.
Hijiri’s hand held a lunch box and she called out with a smile.
“Shinobu-kun, Machina-san, if you like, would you like to eat together?”
“Mh? How rare. You’re not going to eat with the others?”
“Ehm, I’m a bit troubled by all their questions from the ruckus this morning.”
…I see. So she escaped, huh. Speaking of questions, I saw Hijiri getting called out during break and talking with someone in the hallway too.
“Well then, let’s eat together today.”
“Okay. Thanks, Shinobu-kun…”
While saying her thanks, Hijiri borrowed an empty chair and stared at Machina for some reason. More precisely, her gaze was fixated on Machina’s hand, which was petting my head.
“What, you jealous?”
“Eh? Uhm… Yeah. I want to pet your—”
“Then I’ll pet your head in exchange, Hijiri.”

“Ehm, Shinobu-kun? I don’t want you to pet my head, rather I want to pet yours…”
“Don’t be shy.”
“S- Somehow, you’re a bit forceful, Shinobu-kun.”
“Don’t fret it.”
No way I would stand the embarrassment of having both Machina and Hijiri pet my head.
A bit hurried, I reached out my hand for Hijiri’s head. Upon that, her glamorous, black hair tickled my fingertips and showing no particular signs of resistance, Hijiri narrowed her eyes pleased.
“Mm… This is…. kind of amazing… My voice is going to leak…”
Apparently she liked it.
When I softly tried to comb my fingers into her hair, her silky hair passed through my fingers and I felt a confined heat under it. Then Hijiri started to smile pleased, so I continued to pet her head for a while, but
“Yah…”
The moment my little finger incidentally touched her ear, she raised a strangely bewitching voice.
“Sh- Shinobu-kun, my ears are a bit, well, too much…”
“Why? You don’t like it?”
“I don’t hate it, but…. Uhn… It tickles…”
“Mhm, it tickles, huh…”
Someway my prankish nature awakened.
In no way able to suppress that, I slowly traced her ear with a feather touch, which was barely a touch at all, whereupon Hijiri trembled her body with a shiver and started to leak a sweet voice.
“Ahn… Shinobu-kun, you meanie… Mm… Stop…”
“Fufu, for saying stop, you’re making a rather pleased face.”
“Please don’t… Ahn… say that…”
Colouring her cheeks red, Hijiri cast down her eyes embarrassed.
…This wasn’t good. I had meant it as a mere prank, but at this rate it seemed like I would be unable to stop. For now I repeated deep breathes in my heart to calm down, whereupon now Machina lightly pulled on the sleeve of my clothes.
…I got the premonition that I would get scolded.

I timidly turned around with that in mind, but Machina didn't say anything in particular and pointed to the door of the classroom awkwardly for some reason.
What was up? When I doubtful followed her direction with my eyes… I confirmed multiple female students in the gap of the opened door or at the hallway windows. They must have been fans of Hijiri as well?
Everyone looked at me with a fierce gaze and severally said with a low voice.
"Th- The rumour is true after all." "Gogyou-senpai is threatened by a Yakuza to keep his company…!" "That Yakuza touched Gogyou-senpai's hair with animalistic eyes." "Poor Gogyou-senpai…"
If my look were just a bit better, a weird rumour might have not spread.
But well, people's rumour only lasted for 75 days.
Not really bothered, I replied with a small wave of my hand, whereupon the girls went pale with "D- Did he hear us?" and Hijiri stood up with attitude.
"What's up? Toilet?"
"N- No. I'll go clear up the misunderstanding quickly. You guys can eat already."
Before even finishing her sentence, Hijiri rushed over to the girls. In regards, Machina, who had stayed quiet so far, rested her chin on her hand on the table and made a small sigh.
"…Popularity sure is though."
Well, you are adored too by a lot of students who call you "Queen" behind your back.
I thought of interjecting so, but I stopped, since it would shock her…

Afterwards my classmates called out to me with mild voices saying "You'll face a lot of troubles, but hang in there, Nanjou" "I'm on your side" "But I'm envious of Gogyou-san" "…That's all you ever say, Katou" while on the other hand unfamiliar students continued to give my jealous glances, then it was after school.
When I watched over Machina, who happily chatted with classmates, with a side-glance, Hijiri, who usually headed for club activities right away, approached me with her bamboo blade pouch over her shoulder

and lowered her head a bit.
“Sorry, Shinobu-kun. You had a lot of troubles because of me today. I didn’t think it would turn out like this…”
“Well, no sweat. You don’t really need to apologies. I enjoyed the tension, so it’s fine.”
As a matter of fact, that much was rather cute. Moreover my classmates took my side.
…In middle school I was feared even more than now and barely had anyone to talk to, so I was really grateful about my classmates’ reaction.
So I showed a smile, but Hijiri slightly worried rested her hand on my shoulder.
“Shinobu-kun, please tell me right away if anything happens. I’ll properly protect you.”
“Mhm~ I don’t think there’s a reason to be that worried. Most of your fans are girls, right? If it’s a girl… I can win her over with sweet talk.”
“…Somehow I got even more worried now. You look like you would really do it.”
“Hey, you sure have become rude.”
Actually, don’t take my joke serious.
I inadvertently showed a wry smile, but Hijiri said with a serious expression.
“Just like Kaoru-san, you aren’t aware of your own charm, Shinobu-kun. I’m sure if you get serious, the junior girls will fall for you. That might be a good thing, but increasing the rivals even more is, well, troubling for me.”
“B- But people are able to strive further specially because they got a rival, no?”
“…Please don’t obscure it.”
Staring into my eyes, Hijiri faintly flushed her cheeks.
“You’re a boy, so I can understand that you’re attracted to various girls. But if you should choose me, I’ll give it my utmost best. I’ll do anything possible. I’ll make sure to satisfy you…”
S- Satisfy? Me?
Hearing this bold words, I suddenly remembered Hijiri spreading her legs like a M from this morning. Moreover while my eyes were drawn to

her ripe breasts or slender waist and even to her perfect, beautiful legs, Hijiri flushed her cheeks even more and continued with “Therefore”.
“Please look at me properly too, just a little longer.”
While saying so, Hijiri cast down her eyes and started to say something about “… Not just Luna-san, but me as well…”, but her voice was just so small that I couldn’t hear it well.
When I tilted my head,
“That’s all I wanted to tell you.”
Hijiri finished so and left the classroom with a wave of her hand. On the other hand I, left behind, dropped my shoulders a bit and put my cheek onto my table like that.
…Please look at me properly too, huh.
In the end, I couldn’t say anything back to her.
What was I doing? I knew it couldn’t continue like this, yet I didn’t do anything. My chest was full of regret.
When I unintentionally felt low with my cheek still on the table, I suddenly made eye contact with an easygoing guy, as he still hadn’t went home. He was our class’ pervert and my friend, Asada Kouta.
“…What’s up, Nanjou? Why the depressed look?”
Approaching me wondering, Asada faintly frowned.
“Could it be, you’re worrying about what to do when you’re attacked by the fan club girls on the street at night, since you’re getting along so well with Gogyou-san?”
“Hey, Hey, if a harmless guy like me gets attacked, then a pervert like you must have been stabbed seven times already.”
“Hahaha… Touché.”
“You’re not denying it!? It’s scary, since your eyes are shallow!”
On the one hand I retorted with attitude while Asada corrected his tone a bit with “Well jokes aside”.
“I don’t think you have to worry about the fan club. I looked a bit into it and the club presidents seems to be someone from your old middle school. The president seems to know a few rumours about you, so I doubt you’ll really get attacked.”
“Wait a sec. Rumours about me? Like what?”
“Stuff like you’re the young master of a Yakuza group or a killer.”

“…Okay. Don’t say anything more. At any rate I have a villain face.”
“Don’t get so depressed, Nanjou. I’ll do something about the fan club. So you just have to act like always.”
“…”
I was honestly happy about Asada’s concern. I was a bit worried about the fan club. But was it really okay if I acted like always?
Even though I would keep running away from Hijiri’s feelings then…
Before I noticed it, I had clenched my fist. Softly loosening them, I thanked Asada and then left the classroom behind me.
By the way, Machina apparently was invited by the girls from class to hang out and left, so I walked down the hallway alone, whereupon my vision captured Hijiri, whatever happened to her club activities.
Like before, Hijiri was surrounded by a couple of students and had a pretty appearance.
But, as soon as Hijiri met my eyes, she showed a smile and separated from the nearby students, rushing over me with sparkling eyes.
…It was a somewhat innocent and adorable smile. It was slightly different from the one she showed to classmates or juniors and hadn’t the usual dignity, but I selfishly thought that I would like to monopolize this smile a bit longer.
Amidst that, Hijiri was faintly out of breath while still smiling at me.
“Shinobu-kun, if you’re going home now, want to go together halfway?”
“Yeah, sure, but are your club activities already over?”
It was still too early. I felt a bit doubtful, whereupon Hijiri quietly whispered into my ear.
“…I got a job call during club activities.”
“I see. So you’re leaving early.”
While I also replied with a quiet voice, I gave the students, who were with Hijiri just now, a side-glance.
Most likely, Hijiri whispered into my ear in consideration of them. She was hiding the fact that she was an exorcist. However, her warm breath touched my ear and her glamorous, black hair brushed my shoulder while even a nice fragrance hung in the air, so I certainly was a bit restless.
Moreover the students were somewhat glaring at me.

“…Hey Hijiri, I’m fine with going home together, but what about them?”
“No worries. I’m happy that they talked to me, but it’s about time I go. Let’s go together.”
Along with her words, Hijiri showed her innocent smile again.
A smile that gave the impression that she rather stayed with me than with the others.
Nodding in response to that smile, I left the school side by side with Hijiri. And while I then was smitten by her dignified side profile, I opened my mouth casually.
“Still, continuing with your club activities when you have that job… Sounds hard.”
“Mhm~ Might be, but I still want to keep doing it. Kendo is a good recreation.”
“Recreation?”
“Yeah. It’s fun playing sports and sweating with others. I just can’t do that with my exorcist training or job…”
“I see. So that’s the reason you keep at it.”
Just like Hijiri said, the exorcist training certainly didn’t feel refreshing. And by confronting devils on her job, there was the danger of losing her life. Unlike the Kendo techniques that are meant to protect, the exorcist techniques mostly aimed at defeating the opponent.
I kind of understood that, since I was getting exorcist training at the Dojo in Hijiri’s house for a while now.
I pondered about these things while giving an agreeable response, whereupon Hijiri showed me a wry smile.
“I guess, the exorcist training is a bit harsh for you too?”
“A bit. But more so it’s fun.”
If I continued the training like that, I could surely get stronger than now.
When I faintly smiled with that premonition, Hijiri widened her eyes a little.
“You’re amazing, Shinobu-kun. There is hardly anyone who says that training is fun. Reminds me, my father praised you how surprisingly fast you learned. But…”
Midway faintly filling her words worry, Hijiri asked reserved.

“Are you sure about your grandfather’s dojo? Lately you’re often coming over to get exorcist training, but do you really have no intention to take over your grandfather’s dojo?”
“Yeah, I think I already told you before, but I have no such intention.”
It was before the sports festival, if I remembered correctly. I had the memory of being asked something similar, when I went to get exorcist training. While remembering about it, I continued my words.
“Actually I was quite weak as a kid and I hated that my weak self couldn’t protect anyone, so I attended my gramps’ dojo. Not to take over the dojo, but to get stronger.”

“…You were trying to get stronger for someone, right…”

A small mumbling that had an isolated tone like a monologue.
Hearing it, the figure of a single girl scurried in the back of my brain.
While I was at a loss for words, Hijiri looked at me fixated and changed the topic without previous notice.
“Shinobu-kun, would you be happy if you can stay with Luna-san and the other from now on?”
“Well, yeah… They are like family to me.”
Unable to grasp the meaning behind the question, I nodded a bit perplexed.
“I see. Then I’ll try even harder at my job.”
“…Mh? How’s that related?”
“Fufu, secret.”
Hijiri smiled roguish, but also a bit proud.
Now unable to understand the meaning of her words, I softly called out while tilting my head.
“Trying hard is all fine, but don’t overdo it, okay?”
“Yeah. Thanks, Shinobu-kun.”
Hijiri brightened her smile and after walking for some time,
“I’m going this way. See you, Shinobu-kun. I think I’ll be coming over next time to help Nazuna-chan study, so let’s play once I’m done.”
“Yeah, I’m looking forward to it.”
When I replied with a small wave of my hand, Hijiri left still smiling.

Most likely she was heading for her job destination now.
…If I just could help her with the job.
When I thought about Hijiri getting injured at her job, my chest was full of turmoil. I quickly wanted to get enough exorcist training and help Hijiri at the actual scene.
While concerned about such thoughts, I walked towards in front of the station, as I wanted to drop by the bookstore, whereupon I heard Luna's voice saying "Shinobu-san" amidst the hustle and bustle.
Stopping a bit surprised, I faced the voice, where Luna stood with a happy smile. Wearing a shopping bag from the supermarket in her hand, she rushed over to me with a smile, but
"Shinobu-s–Kyaa!"
Luna perfectly tripped midway. I hastily drew closer to her.
"E- Everything alright?"
"Yes! The eggs are fine!"
Confirming the contents of the shopping bag, Luna replied with a great nod.
"Okay, but be a bit more worried about your own body."
You could get new eggs as much as you please.
When I gently took her hand, Luna tilted her head puzzled with "Why did I even trip?" and stood up, directing a smile at me.
"Are you on your way home?"
"Well, I wanted to stop by the bookstore, but you're shopping?"
"Yes, my part-time job is over, so I am shopping for dinner."
…Part-time job, huh.
As a matter of fact, Luna recently started to work part-time at a nearby family restaurant on the referral of Asada's older sister for the reason of learning about society and saving up money for university. Right now she was in the training period.
She surely wasn't used to the job yet and I felt bad about disturbing her, so not even once I went to the restaurant so far, but once her training was over, I should drop by.
While such thoughts crossed my mind, I softly opened my mouth.
"Hey Luna, as we already met, want to go home together?"
"Ehm, I would love to, but I am still in the middle of shopping…"

Apparently Luna only bought bargain goods and was heading for a different supermarket now.
So I decided to drop by the bookstore some other time and accompanying Luna, we two went to a nearby supermarket and set foot into it.
There I took a shopping basket and Luna started to pick a menu for dinner.
Amidst that, I stopped in front of the Sashimi corner.
…I would like to try fat tuna.
“Shinobu-san, what do you want to eat tonight?”
“Mhm.”
It was expensive after all, so she likely would get angry if I asked her to buy it?
“If you want, I can make your favourite mapo doufu?”
“Guess so…”
But I believed that Nazuna and Elni would love to have Sashimi as well.
“Uhm, Shinobu-san, are you listening to me?”
“What to do— eh, Uwah!”
Before I noticed it, I had felt the sensation of soft lips on my ear. a sweet breathe and Luna’s play-biting. When I inadvertently returned to my senses, Luna smiled roguish.
“Shinobu-san, please listen properly. What do you want for dinner?”
“Ah, yes, sorry. I want to eat fat tuna.”
“Eh? That is a bit expensive, so Tomoe-san will get angry…”
“Please. Man up!”
“Ehm, I am not a man, you know?”
“Hm, then I’ll give you a kiss, so please.”
Instantly, Luna stared blankly, as she took my joke seriously, and then put the fat tuna into the shopping basket without hesitation, walking on in a good mood.
“N- No, wait, Luna! It was just a joke! You gotta retort! You don’t need to buy it for real!”
While I hastily stopped Luna, our dinner then was set to mapo doufu in the end and finishing our shopping, we left the supermarket behind us.
And when we two headed for the house, Luna suddenly shifted her gaze

to the nearby park.
This park, Park Midorikawa, was a famous dating spot around here.
“Oh, you want to stop by there?”
“No, I have to prepare today’s dinner, so maybe next time.”
Replying with somewhat regretful words, Luna walked on. While matching my pace to hers beside her and fixing my grip on the shopping bag, I asked with a casual tone.
“Reminds me, how’s your job going? Everything’s fine?”
“Yes. Everyone at the restaurant is nice. It is really fun.”
“…Have you tripped so far?”
“I, I tripped twice…”
Luna blushed embarrassed and I gently reached out my hand with a smile.
“If you feel like grumbling, I’ll listen to you anytime. I’m sure it’s a lot of work, but hang in there.”
When I petted her head along with my words, Luna smiled with “Thank you”, then happily sparkled her eyes.
“When I keep working hard, save up money and can attend university together with you, then I might get to go home with you like today.”
“Yeah, might be.”
The reason Luna started to work part-time.
The started aiming for university and learning about society, so she could fit into the human world despite being a devil and stay together with everyone forever.
—Because I always want to stay with Shinobu-san and the others from now on.
Luna told me these words once.
Suddenly remembering them, my chest slowly became warmer. And then, still smiling, Luna softly conveyed her feelings carefully.
“I hope I can attend university together with Machina, Hijiri-san and Kaoru-san. Going to university together and going home together with sometimes hanging out somewhere on the way. Spending time like this sounds really fun.”
Like talking about a dream, Luna smiled joyful.

The future she picture was my wish and casually and calmly walking home with her felt just so lovely for some reason…

* * *

An early afternoon on a holiday. Amidst the delicious sound of chewing snacks, there was a single girl holding a bag of rice crackers in my field of vision.
Calling herself a Goddess and in charge of foolery, she was Elni.
Ordered features that reminded you of a delicate doll. Her big eyes red like a Rubin and her silver hair tied up in twin tails sparkled glamorous today as well. Also, I didn't grow tired of watching her joyful behaviour of eating snacks, but
"…You know, Elni, lately I'm a bit worried."
I softly shifted my gaze away from Elni, looked at the window frame of my room and quietly started to talk.
"It's about school. Everyone is calling me 'Ogre' or 'Devil'. Well, that's nothing new, but lately I even got the nickname 'Harem King'…"
I thought that the reason for that was probably that Machina was always by my side, Hijiri's action and Minami's physical contact.
"Of course my classmate don't call me like that and I can brush off bag gossip like that. It's no use to always worry about other's opinions."
Before I noticed it, the rice cracker chewing sound was gone. Elni surely was listening to me seriously. I continued with my talk while still facing the window.
"But it seems Hijiri is concerned about it. Machina is a bit worried too. And it looks like Asada is working in the shadows as well. So I thought it's better for me to not do anything, but what do you think?"
When I shifted gaze back expectant,
"…*snore, snore*"
Of all things, Elni carefully hugged the rice cracker bag and was sleeping with an innocent face.
That sleeping face was highly adorable.
But, I faintly frowned and lightly slapped Elni's cheeks right and left.
"Hey, wake up. I was being serious here. Don't fall asleep at a time like

this.”
“Mmh? Ah, sorry. I unknowingly fell asleep. I’ll give you some crackers, so forgive me.”
“…I don’t want any crackers.”
Even though she fell asleep on my story, she made an indifferent face.
I should reject her on a trial. By doing so, Elni might reflect on her actions a bit.
“I don’t know you anymore. Get out of my room already. And you can laze around in your own room all you want.”
“…Eh? Wh- Why are you so angry? The usual Shinobu would forgive me with a pinch on the cheek. C’mon, pinch them as much as you want.”
Elni looked somewhat worried, but I turned my back to her half-prankish.
“Hm, if you aren’t going to leave, then I’ll.”
“U- Uwaaah! Wait, Shinobu! I won’ ever doze off again! I’ll even give you all the crackers! I’ll listen to whatever you say! Please, just forgive me!”
“No, no, you don’t need to feel that guilty. I overdid it too. Sorry.”
Lowering my head and taking one rice cracker from Elni, who was half in tears, I sat down on the bed and made a sigh.
“But I wonder why I scare people. Even though I’m so pretty, such a mystery…”
“M- Mhm~”
“Hey Elni, what’s with the face that says ‘What nonsense are you saying when you have a face that gets you reported to 110 by walking on the street. Even the kids on the street would foam at the mouth upon seeing you’.”
“I, I’m not making such a face! I don’t want to make you angry again!”
“…I see. My bad. I was just paranoid.”
When I lowered my head again, Elni crossed her arms with a serious expression on a rare occasion.
“I think it’s true that you have an evil look. But personally I think instead of your look, your aura is the problem.”
“My aura?”
“Yeah. For example, Luna gives of a gentle one. Machina is like a

Queen and Nazucat a kitten, while Tomoe-san is kind of a leopardess."
"And me?"
"A wild tiger."
…Obviously anyone would be scared if someone like that stood in front of him.
"You see, you're doing martial arts, so how should I say, you don't give off the vibes of an ordinary guy. And I heard that real masters can suppress their aura. So you should hurry up and become a master too, Shinobu."
"Well, my gramps and dad are like that, but I wouldn't have such troubles if it was that easy to become a master. Any other ideas?"
"Let' see… How about smiling all the time?"
"Yeah, I'm trying that at times already. Like this."
When I made a smile for a trial, Elni trembled her shoulders with a shiver.
"…I, I thought you would eat me."
"Hehehe, you look really tasty."
"Uwaaah! Don't eat me! Perverted Shinobu!"
"Hey, hey. I didn't mean it like that. Stop reacting like Kaorun."
When I angrily poked her cheeks lightly and played around for a bit, Elni suddenly faced the clock on the wall and opened her mouth remembering.
"Reminds me, it's about time Hijiri and Kaorun are coming over to play."
"…Elni, they aren't coming to play."
"Oh right! It's war! Today for sure, I'll beat Kaorun at the game!"
"Hey, hey. I know you want to play, but they are coming over to help Nazuna with her studies, you know? So keep low today."
By the way, Nazuna told me yesterday that Hijiri would be coming over. Like previously promised, they would hold a study session for the proficiency test.
That said, the important Nazuna was currently having an afternoon nap, since last night she stayed up late by blurting out "I'll become serious tomorrow. I don't want a tomorrow, until I win." while holding on the controller of her game console.

Well, that aside… It was already this late, huh.
I had nothing to do, so I should go prepare some snacks. I slowly stood up, left the room together with Elni and showed up in the living room, but
"…A waitress?"
The moment I saw her, I inadvertently tilted my head.
A white blouse and a straight skirt with pink suspenders. And her beautiful legs were clad in knee socks as white as her blouse.
Was it the uniform from her part-time job? Certainly she was supposed to have a shift this evening, but why was Luna dressing like that at home?
Said Luna sat on the sofa and was absent-minded watching something that looked like an album while a woman with sharp ordered features was next to her.
This woman, who looked young just in appearance, was my mother, Nanjou Tomoe. For some reason she was happily fiddling with the digital camera, but I was more concerned about Luna.
"Hey Mom, why is Luna wearing these clothes?"
"Fufu, cute, isn't it? You might not know it, but is are Luna-chan's work uniform. She put it on for me, when I asked her earlier."
…It was her work uniform after all.
Okay, I definitely should visit her once her training was over.
Without doubt my heart would be soothed by just looking at her uniform appearance.
When my cheeks formed a small smile, my mother lightly waved with the digital camera in her hand and smiled at me.
"Hey Shinobu, I'm going to take some pictures now and I guess you also want some, right? How does 1000 yen per picture sound?"
"…Mom, I'll pay with my smile, so hand over the data, no the whole camera."
"Judging by that smile, your words and your actions, it looks like a thievery. Well, I would be willing to give you one picture for a massage of my shoulder."
"Not just your shoulder, I'll even massage your hips and legs."
"…But no my breasts, you hear?"

“Who on earth would do that! Don’t say weird stuff with a straight face!”
When I retorted with attitude, Elni, who kept quiet so far, frowned faintly and jerkily pulled on the sleeve of my clothes.
“Shinobu, Tomoe-san has a D-cup just like Kaorun. I think there are plenty of people who would massage them. So it’s not right to say ‘who on earth’.”
“I, I see. My bad— wait, no! Why am I getting scolded! Actually, you didn’t need to tell me about the D-cups!”
Still, Kaorun had D-cups, huh.
I got a bit excited at heart, whereupon Luna faced Elni and me with an “Ah”, as she came back from her dream world from our ruckus, and called out with a smile.
“Shinobu-san, Elni-chan, please look at this. It is so cute.”
“Yeah, these waitress clothes suit you well. It’s cute.”
“No, that is not what I meant. I mean the pictures.”
…I tried to tell her my impression despite my embarrassment, yet Luna ignored it with a smile.
While feeling somewhat miserable at heart, Luna pointed at one album. The opened page showed a picture of a baby with an adorable face. I could also confirm a comment written by my father that said “Shinobu-kun – 3 months old – Taking a nap. Tomoe keeps saying ‘I love you’ to him, so I was a bit jealous”.
“Mhm, that baby has a promising future. He could become a second Hikaru Genji.”
“…I thought so back then too.”
Hearing my joke, my mother made a deep sigh.
“As a baby your were pure and innocent, yet now you’re not even close to Hikaru Genji, but Mephistopheles. You’re only ominous like a devil. Just how did you turn out like this?”
“I must come after my mother.”
“…I’ll smack you?”
The moment my mother swung her fist then, Luna frowned and interjected.
“Tomoe-san, Shinobu-san is not ominous. He is really cool. Please do

not say such weird things."
"O- Oh please, Luna-chan. Of course I was just joking. You're right, Shinobu is cool. Yeah, really…"
In a somewhat flustered state, my mother swiftly averted her gaze from Luna.
As always, she was weak against Luna. While I made a wry smile, Luna started to look at the album together with Elni again, leaking a somewhat sexy sigh.
"Ahh… I want such a cute baby as well…"
"Well then, Luna-chan, ask Shinobu—Mmg."
Before she could say anything strange, I covered my mother's mouth with my palm.
Upon that, my mother softly shook off my hand and changed her words.
"But Luna-chan, it's quite a lot of work to raise a baby, you know? Shinobu often cried 'I want breasts' and seeing that, my husband screwed around with 'Me too'… He was so cute, my husband that is…"
"Just how much do you love dad?"
When I commented so half-astonished, my mother showed no particular sign of concern and clapped her hands together with a roguish smile, as she thought of something.
"Hey Luna-chan, since we're on the topic, want to practice raising a baby? As for a practice partner… We have two right here."
At the same time of her words, my mother clapped Elni and my shoulder. In that moment,
"The Goddess flees towards an unknown tomorrow!"
"Our fight starts now!"
Elni stood up and tried to escape, as even she didn't want to play a baby, and I tried to follow her, but my mother firmly grabbed only me on the shoulders. Moreover my vision fell on Luna sparkling her eyes with a bright smile.
A natural erotic big sister in front. The tyrant of our house behind. I might be done for. I swallowed my saliva with a gulp.

…A few minutes later.

Playing baby with an incredible embarrassing outfit, I was in Luna's arms.
Normally my heart would jump in joy from her sweet fragrance and soft warmth. But, right now my heart was only filled with shame.
While my cheeks burned hot like a fire, Luna was really enthusiastic about practicing for some reason and petted my head along with a gentle voice.
"Shinobu-san, it is about time for your afternoon nap. Time for beddy-byes. Shall Mama sing you a lullaby?"
"—Please a rock song, Mum. I want to ride a bike in my dream."
"Geez, Shinobu-san, you are a baby, so do not speak."
"…A baby has no right for free speech?"
"Th- That is not it, but if possible, I would like you speak in baby talk."
"Hey, don't ask for the impossible. As if the cool and rocking me could do that. Are you telling me to betray my few fans?"
"…You will not do it no matter what?"
"No, it's an idol's job to "overcome prejudices". I'll try it."
Aww, I was weak against Luna too.
However, Luna seemed to have fun, so I had no other choice. I shrugged my shoulders and grinded my teeth… Then I decided to properly get on with the practice.
"Well then, Shinobu-san, let us take a nap now."
"…Wäh."
"Ehm, you are not sleepy yet?"
"Mm…"
I nodded in confirmation. Just for the record, usually I would be more composed and unaffected. When I made such excuses in my heart, my mother, who had watched silently so far, snorted and right away started to snickering while covering her mouth.
…Aw, somehow, I wanted to die. I couldn't express it well, but I just wanted to die. Seriously, what was I doing…
Luna must consider it disgusting as well without doubt. When I shifted my gaze while feeling close to tears, Luna surprisingly enough leaked a sweet "Hahn" voice.
"Shinobu-san is too cute. I always want to take care of you. I never want

to let go of you like this!”
Luna repeatedly rubbed her cheek lovely against mine while in a spellbound state.
…Strange. Suddenly I felt like living on. Luna’s cheeks felt so pleasant that I felt a small happiness in my chest, but it was only for a short moment. Still snickering, my mother said something unnecessary for no apparent reason.
“Luna-chan, you can’t play around forever. You properly have to put Shinobu to sleep.”
“But, it looks like he is not sleepy yet. What should I do?”
“Then— Breasts!”
“Breasts, you say?”
My mother asserted Luna, who asked back like a parrot, with a “Yes”.
“Babies will get sleepy when they had their fill. Besides, Shinobu loves breasts. Therefore, Luna-chan, give Shinobu your breasts.”
…Hey, hey, Mom, what outrageous joke are you telling while laughing? Besides, if it was Luna, she wouldn’t go so far as— wait, this natural erotic big sister was unbuttoning around her chest while blushing. Inadvertently widening my eyes, my mother called out to stop her in a surprised state.
“L- Luna-chan! It’s practice, so just pretend to! Pretend, you hear! You don’t need to have him suck on your breasts for real!”
“Ah, you are right. He was just so cute that I unconsciously…”
So Luna would let me suck her breasts unconsciously.
I opened my widened eyes even more whereas my mother leaked a “T-To think she would take me serious…” and Luna presented me a lap pillow with a smile. While her voluminous breasts were bouncing,
“Shinobu-san, here my breasts.”
Luna brought her big breasts slowly closer to me with a calm tone for a baby. Through the unbuttoned part, I could confirm a black brassiere. And two hills and a valley from pressing her round swellings against each other.
The huge, beautiful breasts with the well-shaped texture gradually drew closer to me and moved bewitching in front of my eyes and noise, then stopping temporarily.

“Please say right away if it is hurts.”
Along with these breasts, the breasts trembled again and finally the plump breasts gently pressed against both my cheeks. Upon that, I felt a softness with a perfect elasticity and tension that melted my cheeks along with a mellow warmth and sweet fragrance.
“How is it? These are your beloved breasts, Shinobu-san. Does it feel good?”
“…..Mm.”
“Fufu, it does, right? Then I will give you some more. I will stop right away when it hurts, so just say the word.”
Leaking a happy voice, Luna strongly pressed her warm breasts onto me. Moreover her voluminous breasts lightly bounced off my cheeks and sometimes moved right and left, which made it unbearable for me.
…M- My reasoning was about to be blown away.
My heart beat fast and my breathing got slightly rough. But when I thought about it, this was just playing baby, wasn’t it?
As soon as I realized that, my reasoning came back instantly and I got embarrassed to the level of getting burning hot cheeks. I was done for if anyone saw me like this. Well, I might already be done for by the fact alone that my mother was watching, but it couldn’t continue like this.

I had to escape as soon as possible— When I was in a hurry like that,

“Sh- Shinobu-kun, Luna-san, just what are you doing?”

suddenly a agitated voice cut in.
When I nervously shifted my gaze with a bad boding, my eyes fell on Hijiri, Kaorun and Machina, both widening her eyes.
R- Right, Hijiri and Kaorun were planned to come over. But why would the three of them come together at this timing? Actually, since when had they been watching? Even know they had their eyes widened while Machina and Kaorun broke the painful silence.
“T- To think that Shinobu-sama was so brave as to play a baby in front of his mother…”
“Sorry, Shinobu! I didn’t notice at all that you were seeking a mother figure to that extent! I’ll be more attentive from now on, so don’t do something as sad as this anymore!”
Completely getting the wrong idea, Kaorun leaked a shrill voice, whereas Machina got teary eyes on the misunderstanding and only Hijiri approached me, puffing up her cheeks sulking.
“It’s not fair that it’s only Luna-san! I also want to spoil Shinobu-kun!”
“Ehh!? H- Hijiri? What are you saying out of the blue?”
“M- Machina is right, Hijiri-chan. Wanting to play baby by your own initiative, there has to be a limit to how bold you can get— wait, she is not even listening!?”
As she wasn’t listening to Kaorun, Hijiri swiftly sat down besides Luna and before she even finished “Let me do it too”, she hugged my body against her voluminous breasts and started to gently pet my head.
“It’s mommy, Shinobu-kun. Good boy.”
“Ahh! Hijiri-san! Do not interfere! Right now I am Shinobu-san’s mama!”
“B- But I couldn’t hold myself back anymore after looking at Shinobu-kun. Just for a little bit is fine, please allow me to take over.”
“…I am sorry. I would prefer it if you would refrain this time. Could you at least wait for an hour?”
“You plan to keep doing this for an hour!? That’s not fair— No, I mean,

I'm so envious— No, not that either. It's not okay to monopolize Shinobu-kun!"
"I, I know that! But I cannot control myself! Please give Shinobu-san back to me!"
"No! I don't want to!"
While quarrelling like that, Luna and Hijiri stretched me left and right.
…Okay, what was up with this situation?
Certainly I felt excitement from the sensation of their breasts.
Don't fight over me— It wasn't really the atmosphere to crack a joke like that. Someone help me. Clinging to that thought, I shifted my gaze to Kaorun and Machina.
But, as she didn't notice my SOS, Kaorun coloured her eyes with agitation and opened her mouth in a flustered state.
"Uhm, ehm… Sh- Shinobu-sama! Hijiri-chan has a stronger mother instinct! I believe that you would get to snuggle her breasts every day once you marry her!"
"Hey, Kaoru! What are you saying!"
Good going, Machina. You stop Kaorun, who lost her head.
"Good grief, why are you making a follow up for Hijiri even at a time like this? Just to tell you— My sister won't lose to Hijiri."
No, not like that. Why are even you losing your head?
I dropped my shoulders dejected, whereas Machina clenched her fists and insisted.
"My sister doesn't only know how to spoil, but she even takes the carrot-and-stick approach! She will be a good wife and mother!"
"Even Hijiri-chan will be a good wife! I guarantee it! After all, Hijiri-chan is the epitome of a pure, feminine beauty that has a dignity for acting when it counts!"
"C- Certainly Hijiri is cool and the devoting type. But I'm sure my sister is superior in techniques!"
"….Techniques, it is? I have some confidence in that domain. Let me proof that by enjoying some baby play with Shinobu-sama after Hijiri-chan."
"H- How did it come to that! It's my turn after Hijiri! This is my house, so show some reservation!"

…This was hopeless.
Apparently they weren't my allies, but an ambush. While the situation sadly got worse and worse, I was still pulled between Luna and Hijiri.
"Hijiri-san! Please let go of Shinobu-san!"
"You let go, Luna-san! You had plenty of fun already! I'm sure that, well, Shinobu-kun would like to snuggle my breasts!"
"…That might be, but he nodded when I asked him if my breasts felt good. So I believe he wants to snuggle mine even more!"
"St- Still, I reckon that Shinobu-kun loves my breasts! Isn't that so, Shinobu-kun!"
"Huh? Eh? Well…"
When I was perplexed by suddenly having the topic directed at me, both Luna and Hijiri showed a worried expression.
"You like my breasts better, right Shinobu-san?"
"Make a choice, Shinobu-kun. Whose breasts are better, mine or Luna-san's?"
"I will acknowledge Shinobu-san's answer. So please tell us."
"…I'm afraid the baby can only answer the question with 'Babu!'."
Urged by the two at the same time, I first tried to crack a joke, but
"Shinobu-san! You can forget about the baby talk now! Please answer properly!"
"I agree with Luna-san! Don't dodge the question, Shinobu-kun!"
"Well, but, ehm…"
Shifting my gaze pressed for an answer, I felt a cold sweat and looking at my mother, who panicked on a rare occasion, I suddenly thought of words to get out of this mess.
"S- Sorry girls, but I like my mother's breasts the best. Y- You know, they say a child feels safe in his mother's breasts. Of course your breasts are great too. But they just can't win against my mother's, I guess, ahaha…"
The worst kind of lie, if I may say so. Moreover, I couldn't pull back now.
While laughing, I desperately tried to change the topic, whereupon Kaorun sparkled her eyes, as her quarrel with Machina had ended at some point, and sharply pointed at me.

“On top of having a sister complex, you even have a mother complex!”
“Sh- Shut up. What’s the problem. I just love them…”
It was right on the mark, so I carelessly ended up leaking half of my true feelings.
Instantly, Luna and Hijiri got teary eyes for some reason and approached my mother together with attitude.
“Not fair, Tomoe-san! That Shinobu-kun chose you, even though you did nothing!”
“Right! Shinobu-kun is shy, so he rarely speaks out the word ‘love’! I’m so envious that he loves you, Tomoe-san!”
“…Wh- Why are you angry at me?”
It must have never occurred to her that she would become the focus of the argument. My mother backed off in a bewildered state, but Luna and Hijiri continued to close the distance.
“Besides Shinobu-san always listens to you, even if he complains or grumbles! He doesn’t even resist when you pet his head! I get the feeling he favours you, Tomoe-san!”
“S- So Shinobu-kun loved you so much. Could it be, Tomoe-san is Shinobu-kun’s type of woman?”
“Ehm, calm down, Luna-chan, Hijiri-chan. What are you getting so hot-blooded for? Besides Shinobu is, well, how should I say it… Ah, right. I got tickets for the aquarium from a friend. I’ll give them to you two. Please cheer up with that.”
Hey, Mom, I can understand your agitation, but don’t bride them. Even I mostly thought that it was a horrible way to sugar-coat, really.
When I was certainly a bit astonished, my mother quickly fled the living room, whereas Luna and Hijiri started to stare at two tickets on the table.
“…Two tickets. Regrettably it looks like only two can go to the aquarium.”
“It would be fun going with you, Luna-san, but I would like to go with Shinobu-kun. Same for you, right Luna-san?”
“Yes. I want to go with Shinobu-san too.”
“Then we’ll have Shinobu-kun choose once more. The other one has to hand her ticket to Shinobu-kun— how does that sound?”
“It is a good idea. No hard feelings.”

Both nodding, Luna and Hijiri made a warm handshake.
S- Seemingly the situation turned dubious again. Before I noticed it, the cold sweat from my forehead had spread to my cheeks and I was at my wit's end.

"—Hold it!"

Suddenly a resolute voice echoed through the living room and when I shifted my gaze, there was Elni, who escaped from the baby play earlier. Just how long had she been hiding? And what was she after? Also, wasn't that the snacks for the guests she was hugging against her chest? Various questions floated in my brain. But if it stopped Luna and Hijiri here, I didn't mind. I continued to look at Elni for help as a last straw. But, reality wasn't as sweet as honey. Elni crossed her arms with a serious expression and looked at the girls like that.
"Luna! Hijiri! That decision— Leave it to me! I'll make a fair setting for both of you! Kaorun, Machina, you two help me too!"
…Now I probably couldn't keep it vague or deceive them anymore. My hope instantly changed into disappointment and I unintentionally leaked a sigh…

Chapter 02: Selfish Wish

…I believed that conflicts essential won't yield anything.
Of course one couldn't avoid verbal disputes or brawls. But depending on the situation, one had to fight no matter what. Yeah, just like right now. This time alone I was prepared to resort to violence.
That said, shamefully enough, my opponent was myself… Just how long would my reasoning last? In front of my eyes were Luna and Hijiri, both wearing maid clothes.
Luna was wearing a cat-ear hairband on her head, whereas Hijiri was wearing a dog-ear one.

…After the ruckus in the living room, everyone left the room for preparations and when they came back after a while, it turned into this.
While Machina, Elni and Kaorun watched over us, the maid-clad Luna and Hijiri each flushed their cheeks and slowly drew closer to me.
In view of this situation, the two of them were going to make some kind of appeal without doubt. And then I would have to choose which of them was better, which meant going to the aquarium together with the winner.
…Looks like this would become a fierce showdown.
It might be that my reasoning would scream for it's life during it.
Hiding the layer of unrest I felt in my heart, I faced the two of them while cladding myself with composure, whereupon Hijiri made her move first, lightly hesitant.
While shaking the dog-ears on her hand, she kneeled in front of me and softly put her own cheek against my thigh for no apparent reason.
Upon that, Hijiri's glamorous, black hair touched my thighs and her soft body warmth threw my heart into turmoil.
"H- Hijiri? What are you doing? What's up?"
"…Woof, woof."
Hijiri replied with a small bark to my questions.
A- Apparently Hijiri had become a dog. I didn't know who gave her the idea, but her upturned gaze and bashful behaviour was foul play.
But I should deal with it composed. For now, I should try to pet her head. I got the feeling that I already had lost my composure, but unable to resists, I reached out my hand for Hijiri's head.
In that moment, Luna made her move now.
As soon as she sat down besides me, she tightly clung to my arm spoiled, whereupon her sweet fragrance and breasts with a full-score on volume got a tight hold on my heart.
"Ehm, you too, Luna, what's up so suddenly?"
"M- Meow…"
I, I see. Judging by the cat-ears on her head, Luna most likely turned into a cat.
She looked really adorable how she happily smiled while somewhat showing embarrassment.

Inadvertently I shifted my hand that was heading for Hijiri towards Luna. Following, I petted Luna's head for a while, whereupon Hijiri suddenly pulled on the sleeve of my clothes sadly.
"Ah, sorry. I haven't forgotten about you, Hijiri."
When I rested my hand on her head with an apology, Hijiri showed a bright smile and once more put her cheek against my thigh.
If Hijiri were a real dog, she might happily wag her tail now.
Somehow, while watching Hijiri's smile, even I came to enjoy it.
I faintly smiled and petted Hijiri's head, whereupon Luna looked at me envious, as she wanted attention.
"…One at a time, okay? So please wait a bit."
On my words, Luna nodded and as she then grew tired of waiting, she clung to me even stronger and brought her blushed face closer.
"Mm… *kiss*… *kiss*…"
Pressing her glamorous lips against my ear, she lightly kissed it twice.
Moreover, she then extended her pink tongue and traced my ear, sometimes gently poking it and then licking it softly.
Luna might just be playing around, but I directly felt her bewitching hot breath, which already cracked my reasoning.
On the other hand, Hijiri clung to my arm too in protest to Luna and brought her bright red face closer, albeit a bit hesitant. Then she stretched the light red tip of her tongue
"Mm…"
and licked my cheek reserved along with a faint moan.
Her smooth tongue tickled my cheek and while showing embarrassment, she looked somewhat happy. So close I noticed her charming expression again and of all things, Luna even started to play-bite my ear.
…I was already done for. At this rate, I didn't know what I would do.
While my own reasoning creaked without me being able to move carelessly, Elni, Kaorun and Machina, who all watched over me, rushed over to me right away, as they noticed my predicament.
"Time out! Time out!"
Like that, Elni swiftly snatched away Luna and Hijiri from me, whereas Kaorun held out an invisible microphone to me with a jerk.
"Shinobu-sama, your decision please. Which one do you want to make

your pet, the dog-eared maid or the cat-eared maid?"
…What a horrible question.
But the more pressing problem was about who to choose.
Both Luna and Hijiri were really cute, which made it difficult to decide.
I crossed my arms and pondered for a while, then I shifted my gaze to Elni as an escape from Luna and Hijiri's hopeful looks. With flickering eyes, I answered.
"Mhm, for a pet, Mad Dog alone is enough."
"…Eh? Instead of Luna or Hijiri, you want me, Shinobu? S- Somehow I'm getting embarrassed…"
No, no. I think you should get angry about that, Elni.
Regardless of my rude remark, Elni faintly flushed her cheeks.
In regards, Luna and Hijiri puffed up her cheeks lightly. And seeing that, Machina quickly took the dog-ear hairband from Hijiri's head and put it onto Elni's head.
"Uwa, this suits you surprisingly well…"
"Fufu, I know right. Gwaar!"
She herself might have wanted to be a Mad Dog, but equipped with the dog-ears, Elni was extremely cute.
"…Nothing we can do against Elni-chan."
"Right. It's regretful, but it doesn't seem like I could win."
Even while lightly dropping their shoulders, both Luna and Hijiri consented.
By the way, as for Kaorun, she casually took the cat-ears from Luna's head and put them on herself while blurting out "Shinobu-sama, in regards to maids, I am the best, right?", but I ignored it with a smile…

Afterwards the showdown still continued, whereat Luna and Hijiri wore sailor uniforms or shrine maiden outfits, became bus guides or policewomen and in the end clad in white gowns or military uniforms all the while changing her appeals along with their costumes, which fiercely agitated my reasoning from beginning to end.
However, while I was aware of my indecisiveness, I just couldn't decide on a winner and the showdown entered it's ninth round. Together with Machina and Elni, who both made a somewhat tired face, Luna came

back into the living room after changing into the outfit of a race queen. A tube top that boldly exposed her waist. Short hot pants. Reflected in both my eyes were her slender hips, long, beautiful legs and firm angles, which were all so erotic.
…It was the most revealing outfit so far. While I inadvertently gulped, Luna doubtful face the door of the living room.
“Uhm, Hijiri-san? What are you doing over there? Hurry up and let us continue the showdown.”
Even though my reasoning was at a state where it would break upon contact, Luna firmly grabbed both my hands full of energy. In regards, Hijiri peeked in only her head between the gap of the door and turned around her head in a flustered state while still hiding her body.
“Wh- What’s this, Kaoru-san? That wasn’t agreed on. I thought I would wear the same one as Luna-san, so I— wait, stop it, Kaoru-san!”
The flustered Hijiri raised a voice to stop her, but it was already too late and she showed up in the living room by being pushed on the back by Kaorun.
But, Hijiri’s outfit turned all my expectations upside down.
I had thought for sure she would wear the same race queen outfit as Luna, but right now Hijiri was wearing just sexy lingerie and socks.
A transparent, sexy pink negligee. Beneath it I could see her voluminous breasts covered by a white brassiere, her slender waist and nicely tense thighs. Moreover, on Hijiri’s every little movement, her big swellings bounced around, which ensnared my heart gravely.
Th- That was against the rules. I hadn’t heard anything of this. But I couldn’t avert my eyes. I lost all confidence to keep my composure and the last bit of my remaining reasoning was about to be blown away too, whereupon Kaorun smiled daring and opened her mouth.
“Judging by Shinobu-sama’s reaction, it seems the victory goes to Hijiri-chan.”
“Wh- What are you saying, Kaoru!”
On Kaorun’s words, Machina immediately attacked with complain.
“I won’t accept this! After all this is all just your ploy! Fight fair and square like my sister!”
“…So you say, but at this rate we will never reach a conclusion, you

know? I take you are getting tired as well, Machina, Elni-san? It is already the ninth round after all. Why not accept now that it is Hijiri-chan's victory?"
Kaorun made a faint sigh with a somewhat exhausted look, but Luna raised a desperate voice with "Please wait!", as she couldn't accept it either.
"This will be the finale! Please let it continue for a bit longer! Besides, it is not settled yet! I will try my best as well!"
"Well, I do not mind, but Luna-san, how do you intend to try even harder…"
Widening her eyes midway in her sentence, Kaorun then stopped her words just like that.
Yeah, I could understand why.
After all, as soon as Luna reached out her hands for her hot pants, she pulled them down and exposed her black panties, as she didn't want to lose to Hijiri. Moreover, she grabbed the hem of her tube top and slowly rolled it up.
…I should have stopped Luna at this point.
If she were to strip off her top like this, her ripe breasts would get exposed. Luna tightly bit her lips and turned bright red up to her ears. However, her appearance of taking off her clothes while fighting against the shame was extremely charming, so I didn't say anything in the end, whereupon Luna temporarily stopped her hands once, then
"…I will win and go to the aquarium with Shinobu-san!"
she grabbed the hem of the tube top again while saying so to encourage herself and hesitated for only a moment. With a jerk, she stripped off her top.
Instantly, her round breasts showed up with a bounce as they were released from the constraining top. The breasts clad in a black brassiere bounced right and left for a moment, then the white, soft flesh of her cleavage bumped into each other on the backlash, swaying around lewdly.
…What an amazing force. Two swellings that closely resembled oversized melons. Unable to get my eyes off the charming bouncing, I was thunderstruck, whereupon I saw Machina timidly grabbing Elni's

shoulders at the edge of my vision.
“T- Troubles, Elni. Sister is too bold. I’m sure a weird switch was flipped for her. I guess we better stop her?”
“No, we should let her be! This is a change for Luna! Listen, Luna! For the sake of winning, take off more clothes!”
“Hey, Elni! Stop saying ridiculous stuff! Besides, even Sister wouldn’t go as far as—”
“I understand, Elni-chan! I will do it!”
“Ehh!? She agreed!?”
“Impossible!”
“I can’t believe it— wait, why are you surprised the most, Elni!”
“I mean! I never thought she would take me serious!”
The surprised Machina and Elni coloured their eyes with innocence and guilt respectively.
The wordless Hijiri and Kaorun were dumbfounded.
Giving these girls a sidelong glance, Luna unhooked her brassiere at her back with still red cheeks.
However, as she indeed was embarrassed, her movements were hesitant and she stopped her hands for a while, but
“The aquarium with Shinobu-san. The aquarium with Shinobu-san. The aquarium with Shinobu-san….”
It must have been to muster her courage. Luna repeated so thrice like a charm, then hesitantly removed the shoulder straps of her bra, slowly lowering the black brassiere… Finally her voluminous breasts were fully exposed.
Regardless of their big size, her breasts had not a shred of slackness and undoubtedly had a pleasant tension and magnificent elasticity.
Beautiful white breasts that truly made you believe it were pieces of art.
The tips of these breasts were coloured in a pale pink and had a stimulating charm that couldn’t be written off as mere pieces of art.
“Beautiful…”
It was my first time seeing Luna’s breasts so close and this clearly.
Losing my senses and leaking my true feelings from my mouth, I swallowed my saliva with a gulp.
On the other hand, accepting my impolite gaze, Luna turned even redder

and tried to cover her breasts with both her hands, but she tightly closed her eyes and did her best to endure the shame.
To be honest, I wanted to touch them. I was dying to. Actually, wouldn't it be rude not to touch them?
Before I noticed it, my reasoning was collapsing with crumbling sounds, bringing me into a quite dangerous situation, whereupon Machina interjected hastily.
"J- Judging by Shinobu's drool, Sister wins this showdown."
"N- Not yet, Machina-san!"
On Machina's words, Hijiri, who had been dumbfounded so far, immediately raised her voice.
"The showdown— starts now! I won't lose!"
"Yes, you're right, Hijiri. It starts— wait, no. It stars now!? Just why!? Accept already that my sister won!"

“No way! I don’t want to lose at all!”
Shouting back at Machina and putting her hand on her clothes,
“Date with Shinobu-kun. Date with Shinobu-kun. Date with Shinobu-kun…”
Hijiri chanted these words like a charm just as Luna had done it, then she took off her negligee while turning bright red.
Instantly, Machina made a grim look and now shook Kaorun’s shoulders with attitude.
“A- At this rate, both Hijiri and Sister will end up naked! You’re responsibly for this! Do something about it, Kaoru!”
“Y- You are right. I understand. Please leave it to me.”
Kaorun nodded numerous times in a flustered state and shifted her gaze with “Hijiri-chan!”.
“Please stop at once! No matter what— just do not take off your socks!”
“What’s with that advice!? Why are even you flipping out, Kaoru? Even though you’re the last we can rely on! Please come back to your senses!”
“I, I am keeping my senses at all times! Besides, please take a look. S-See, Shinobu-sama’s appearance of being approached by girls is as pretty as a painting.”
While breaking out a cold sweat on her forehead, Kaorun faced me and gave a thumps-up.
“Shinobu-sama! So wonderful! Your female fans are already gathering behind the sports hall!”
“Haha, you’re as funny as ever. Even in this situation you make me inadvertently laugh. But I’ll smack you afterwards.”
“If so, then please onto my bottom— wait, no! It is embarrassing, so please stop it— wait, not that either! I, I wonder what I should have said at a time like this!?”
“…You’re unexpected useless. Just how agitated are you?”
Machina gave a plausible impression with a weary behaviour, whereas Hijiri with still red cheeks tried to unhook her bra and seeing that, Elni immediately put her hand on the strap.
“Stop it, Hijiri! Let’s end the showdown here! Why not call it a draw! You put on some clothes too, Luna! To begin with, if Nazucat were to see—”

“Mh? What about me?”
Midway in Elni’s sentence, of all things the person in question made an entrance.
Nazuna suddenly showed up in the living room. Me included, everyone froze up all alike, whereas Nazuna had frizz-like bed hair, as she had been enjoying an afternoon nap so far.
“What’s the ruckus about? Today’s my study session. It’s about time we— wait, Uwaah! Why did Luna-oneechan and Hijiri-oneechan take off her clothes!? Just what’s going on!?”
As soon as her gaze fell on Luna and Hijiri, Nazuna widened her eyes in surprise.
In regards, Luna and Hijiri seemed to have finally come back to their senses due to Nazuna’s reaction.
Each of them turned so bright red that it wasn’t gradable anymore and curled themselves up like that to hide their bodies. And amidst that, Kaorun made a follow up while still showing agitation.
“N- Nazuna-chan, we are studying health and physical education. Before looking after your studies, Nazuna-chan, I gave a lesson to prepare myself.”
“But, Kaoru-san, the proficiency test doesn’t cover health and physical education.”
“I, did not know that. I- I made a mistake. But well, that aside, Nazuna-chan, let us hurry up with the studies. We are short on time. I will now turn you into a perfect honour students with my abilities.”
“Yeah! Okay! I’ll become a honour student until the test is over! Because mom got angry at me with ‘Don’t sleep, but study’ earlier!”
Apparently accepting Kaorun’s lie, Nazuna replied with a big nod.
On the other hand, Kaorun made a sigh of relief and then tried to quickly leave the living room by pulling Nazuna on her hand, but
“Oh, right.”
Nazuna stopped as she remembered something and pulled out something that looked like a ticket out of her pocket.
“Brother, it’s a present from mom. A ticket for the aquarium. She said you should go together with Luna-oneechan and Hijiri-oneechan, since she had one more. Good for you, right?”

“T- Truly a godsend, Shinobu-sama. Now we can end the showdown and you three can go to the aquarium together. The world knows some plays for only threesomes as well. Are you not glad?”
“…Well yeah. So glad that I’m crying. But well, Nazuna saved the day. I feel like giving her a hug. Hahaha…”
When I replied to Kaorun with a dry laugh, Nazuna spread her arms as to say it was okay to hug her, but I brushed it off with “It’s only a feeling.” and made a small sigh.
What was my mother thinking? If she had one more ticket, she should have said so from the beginning. Was she poking fun at us? Or did she just forget that she had three tickets?
The truth was uncertain, but… nevertheless, it was impressive that my reasoning withstood.
If it hadn’t been the sexy and cool me that ranked right after sexy, I might have committed a mistake. Feeling relief and fatigue, I leaned my back into the sofa, whereas
“Well then, Hijiri-san, let us go to the aquarium with the three of us.”
“Yeah. Sounds fun. On which day do we go, Luna-san?”
“Ehm, I have a shift today and tomorrow, so how about Sunday next week?”
“I’m fine with that. How about you, Shinobu-kun?”
Luna and Hijiri nodded to each other and looked at me with sparkles in their eyes.
…I had no reason to turn them down. I faintly smiled and shook my head front-to-back. Like that the date with the three of us was decided upon next week Sunday.

* * *

After the turmoil, Hijiri and Kaorun left the living room together with Nazuna. They surely looked after her studies in her room.
As Nazuna was taking it seriously, I couldn’t hear any voices of her fooling around and with time passing like that, Luna then went to her part-time job. Now it was evening.
After training my body in the garden, I went into the living room,

whereupon Kaorun suddenly entered the room. She stopped once she noticed me, so I called out to her with a casual tone.
“Yo, how’s Nazuna doing?”
“Yes, she is working harder than expected, so I would like to teach her some more after dinner and a break. I also spoke with Tomoe-san just now, which resulted in me preparing dinner for today.”
“Ohh, thanks.”
As she technically was a maid, Kaorun’s cooking skills were superb. Luna was out for her job tonight anyway, so it was a great help. When I smiled, Kaorun smiled roguish.
“Shinobu-sama, I will use the best of my abilities to prepare tonight’s dinner. However, I demand a kiss from you as payment. Depending on your technique, I will pay back your change with a kiss too.”
“Instead of a kiss, I’ll pet your head. Sorry, but comply with that.”
“…It is a promise, you hear?”
To my surprise a pet on the head alone was enough too. Accepting my reply, Kaorun asked in a good mood.
“Incidentally, Shinobu-sama, do you have any wishes for dinner?”
“Mhm~ Not really, anything is fine.”
“Shinobu-sama, that answer is the most troubling for a cook. You must have one or two things you would like to eat.”
“Well, but even then I can’t ask you to make it for me…”
“You do not need to show any reservations. We have a close relationship, have we not? If there is something you would like to eat, then please say it outright.”
“Then a Manchu Han Imperial Feast.”
“…Shinobu-sama, even close relationships have manners. If you keep fooling around, then you will get a dog chew bone for dinner. Now please voice out your thoughts of ‘Gehehe, I want to eat sushi from Hijiri’s naked body’ while drooling.”
“Hey, aren’t you fooling around? As if I could eat sushi of her naked body with my family around.”
“Well, you are right, but a Manchu Han Imperial Feast, huh…”
Kaorun placed her index finger onto her cheek in thought.
“I believe I can fulfil your expectations as much as possible with hard

work, but would it really be all right to make it? I would charge all the necessary food expenses to the Nanjou Household, you know?"
"S- Spare me. If that happened, mom would without doubt beat the hell out of me without wasting her breath. My body would be unable to take in any food. Right now I want to eat the dish called Mother and Child Reunion. If possible, please make that."
"Mother and Child Reunion? Just to make sure, it does not mean anything perverted, does it?"
"Like hell it does!"
While cracking such jokes, we both headed into the dining kitchen together. After confirming the contents of the fridge, Kaorun nodded small with "Looks like I can make it with these" and smiled at me.
"Shinobu-sama, I will start to prepare dinner now. You are in the way, so please leave at once."
"…Watch your language a bit. Even I can help out at least."
"Then can you pray for the food to turn out delicious while watching some anime? No males in the kitchen. Incidentally, if you fool around with 'Then Shinomun will be a girl for only now', then I will make you cross-dress at once… What will it be?"
"I'll watch anime docile."
I was sick of cross-dressing.
I gave up on helping out and returned to the living room, where I kept watching TV absent-minded while the dinner was completed at some point.
After that, Hijiri, Nazuna, Machina, Elni and my mother gathered in the dining kitchen and while it was regrettable that Luna was absent, we all savoured the food Kaorun made.
A colourful salad was displayed on the table. Furthermore there was steaming Miso soup. When I picked the main dish, chicken and eggs on rice, with my chopsticks, the fluffy food texture of eggs spread in my mouth and the deliciousness of the well flavour chicken meat made me smile broadly.
This was good…
While everyone ate Kaorun's dishes with relish, my mother suddenly faced Hijiri and leaked a voice of admiration.

“You sure have good manners, Hijiri-chan. Even when eating, you look so refined.”
“Th- Thank you…”
When Hijiri flushed her cheeks faintly in embarrassment, my mother peeked at Nazuna with a smile. There Nazuna was enjoying her meal with a bright smile, whereas my mother shifted her gaze back to Hijiri and softly opened her mouth like that.
“Thank you for looking after Nazuna’s studies today.”
“No problem. I gladly helped and it was fun.”
While replying so, Hijiri gently petted her head, whereupon Nazuna’s smile broadened even more.
“Hijiri-oneechan and Kaoru-san are really good at teaching. So I’ll work a bit more on my studies after dinner.”
Ohh, it was quite rare for Nazucat to be this serious about studying.
When I was slightly surprised, Hijiri shifted her gaze towards me and called out with a soft voice.
“Ehm, Shinobu-kun, you have rice on your cheek.”
“…It, It’s in fashion now. Don’t worry about it.”
Even while making an excuse out of desperation, it didn’t change the fact that it was embarrassing. I reached out my hand for my cheek right away, but even faster
“Fufu, you’re so cute, Shinobu-kun.”
Hijiri extended her hand to my cheek with a giggle and softly removed the rice grain. Then she fixedly looked at her fingertips that held the rice grain and coloured her cheeks red for some reason.
Seeing that, Elni gave the rice grain a passionate look.
“…Hijiri, if you aren’t going to eat it, can I have it?”
“N- No! I’ll eat it…!”
Along with her words, Hijiri opened her well-formed lips and put her slender fingers into her mouth with a small sucking sound while showing a slight hesitation.
This casual behaviour was somewhat erotic.
While I averted my eyes, Kaorun smiled roguish again.
“I am sure Hijiri-chan thought ‘Ahh… The rice grain from Shinobu-kun’s cheek. Actually I wanted to remove it with my mouth…’ just

now.”
“K- Kaoru-san! Please don’t say anything weird! I only thought about that for a bit.”
“…For a bit?”
The instant Machina interjected doubtful, Hijiri turned bright red immediately with “Auh…” and my mother blurted out a “So cute”, whereupon Kaorun threw out her chest with pride.
“As you can see, Hijiri-chan is a really cute girl. On top, she is beautiful, has a good figure and personality with even outstanding cooking skills.”
“Hee, then I would like Hijiri-chan to cook something for us next time.”
While giving an agreeable response, my mother smiled, whereupon Machina once again interjected in protest.
“Tomoe-san, even I can cook.”
“Eh? Really? Then I guess I can ask you to make dinner when Luna has work.”
“…I did not know. So Machina can cook too.”
My mother and Kaorun showed a surprised expression.
In regards, the ones that knew Machina’s cooking skills, Hijiri, Elni and I turned pale all alike and called a stop. By the way, Nazuna was engrossed in her meal even now while still smiling…

After dinner, I got out of the bath and made myself comfortable on the sofa in the living room, whereupon Machina showed up in the room. When she noticed me, she sat down besides me and smiled somewhat gently.
“Hey Shinobu, Nazuna seems to work really hard. Just now I went to bring her snacks, but she was studying enthusiastic and Hijiri and Kaoru said they would keep her company for a bit longer.”
“…I just hope she doesn’t get a fever from suddenly working so hard.”
“Nazuna is different from Elni, so I’m sure she’ll be fine.”
“Hey, hey, isn’t that a bit rude to Elni?”
When I showed a wry smile, Machina replied with a serious face.
“I mean, I never saw Elni study seriously. She’s always just playing around and if she were to suddenly start studying, I would think it snows the next day. I don’t even have seen her reading a book.”

“Well, it certainly doesn’t suit her… Speaking of, where’s Elni?”
Speak of the devil and she shows up. This time Elni showed up in the living room with an unusual serious look.
But, on an extremely rare occasion, Elni was holding books against her chest.
It weren’t manga books. What was going on? Could it be Elni started to read a proper book?
When I inadvertently sparkled my eyes, Elni put the books on the table and sat down on the sofa. Seeing that, Machina opened her mouth perplexed.
“E- Elni? What’s with these books? What are you going to do with them?”
“Mh? I borrowed them from the library and I was going to enjoy some smart reading now. Anything wrong with that?”
“…Who are you? What did you do to Elni? So far I have never seen Elni reading a book except manga.”
“Machina, I certainly was hooked on manga until now. But it ends today. Reading broadens one’s horizon. I discovered reading. And now I feel really intellectual.”
Machina showed a playful expression ,whereas Elni pushed up her invisible glasses with a jerk and replied composed.
“—Can a human live on knowledge alone? I want to find out.”
“I- I want to find out what’s going on in your head. Actually, it’s empty, right?”
While once again making her bewilderment obvious, Machina displayed her usual trick of playing along with the mood. In regards, Elni surprisingly ignored Machina. She made an unblinking face, dropped her gaze and quietly opened the book.
Instantly, Machina opened her eyes widely with “Ehh!?”.
“E- Elni, you aren’t getting angry like usually? The usual Elni would get sulky with ‘Calling me stupid is really mean’. If you keep quiet like that, it’s somewhat out of character for you.”
“…Sorry, Machina, but you’re disturbing my reading. Could you keep it quiet?”
“Seriously, what’s up with you, Elni…”

Elni showed an obvious unusual reaction.
Receiving it, Machina shifted her gaze to me worried and shook my shoulder fiercely.
“What do we do, Shinobu? Elni became weird.”
“…She’s always been weird, you know?”
“Not like that! I’m saying she’s weirder than normal!”
“You’re quite rude…”
Standing up half-wearily, I peeked down at Elni’s hands as I was a bit interested.
“…It’s books about magic tricks. Oh, are you going to beautifully change your class from our personal house guard to magician? I’m really pleased about your efforts.”
“Mhm~ No matter how much I try, I can’t become a verbal alchemist like you, Shinobu, so I’m aiming to be a jester sage. I don’t plan to become a magician. Besides, I only borrowed these books because I want to teach Nazucat some magic tricks.”
“Verbal alchemists and jesters asides, teaching Nazuna magic tricks? Why that?”
“Actually, her school is holding the student council election soon.”
“Yeah, speaking of, our school too.”
While making a short agreeable response, I listened to Elni’s story.
“Nazucat’s friend seems to be running for the position of the student council president and Nazuna was entrusted with her election campaign.”
“…She’s as popular as ever. But how are magic tricks and the election campaign related?”
“Ehm, well, when she told me about it, she asked for my advice with ‘What should I do for the campaign?’ and she took me serious when I just blurted out ‘To leave behind an impression, how about you do something with an impact, like magic tricks?’ which I came up with on the spot…”
“I see. That’s why you’re studying magic tricks now.”
Most likely her earlier attitude was just to change her mood, so that she could concentrate on studying. Nodding understanding, I fleeting shifted my gaze to Machina.

Elni's reaction had confused Machina. She might get angry with "Don't do something so misleading!".
Was what I thought, but against my expectation, Machina made a big sigh of relief.
"I'm glad. It was the usual stupid Elni…"
"Muh, that's rude, Machina."
"Actually, you were seriously worried, weren't you? To be honest, you quite like Elni, right?"
When Elni puffed up her cheeks a bit and I asked half-teasingly, Machina didn't deny my question in particular and mumbled "G- Guess I should go take a bath" while averting her eyes. She left the living room in an escape with red cheeks.
On the other hand, I stayed with a wry smile and looked through the books of magic tricks together with Elni. But after a while I shifted my gaze towards the clock on the wall of the room concerned.
…Luna was late today. Usually she would be home at this time.
Getting worried, I took out my cell phone. Then I gave calling her a try, whereupon after a few call signs, I could hear Luna's strangely enchanted voice.
"Hello~"
"Y- Yo, hello. It's me, the always cool Shinobu-san… You're Luna, right? What's up today? You're not coming home yet?"
"…Shinobu-san's voice, so wonderful."
"Huh? Eh? Somehow, you sound a bit strange?"
"That is not true. I am normal. Please let me hear your voice some more."
Luna leaked a somewhat erotic voice. She obviously behaved weird.
Bewildered, I gently got to the main topic.
"So, ehm, are you still working?"
"No, my shift is already over."
"Mh? Then what are you doing? Hurry up and come home."
"Yes, okay. I want to come home quickly to touch your ear, pet your head, hug you and kiss you."
"…Wh- What are you blabbering?"
Indifferent to my growing bewilderment, Luna's voice through the

phone became somewhat distant, as she removed the cell phone from her ear.
“Everyone, Shinobu-san is waiting for me, so I am going— Kyaa!”
“Luna? Hey, what’s up? What happened?”
A noise and a small scream at the same time.
While my worry grew stronger than my confusion, the voices of a couple of girls, maybe from the restaurant?, including Luna’s faintly reached my ear.
“I guess it’s better if someone sends Luna-chan home.” “I wanted to do so from the beginning. Leave it me.” “…Manager, please stop licking over your lips so erotically. Also, are you okay, Luna-san? Did you hurt yourself on your fall…?” “I am fine. No problem. Shinobu-san is waiting, so I am going home now.” “Y- You said that earlier too, but who is that Shinobu-san?” “My beloved.”
Such a conversation unfolded and Luna readily talked about good and embarrassing things like “Shinobu-san is really gentle, cool and tells funny jokes…”, but suddenly the call was cut midway.
“…What was that.”
Inadvertently becoming slack-jawed, I watched my cell phone with my head titled for a while, then
“Guess I’ll go pick her up.”
I somehow got even more worried than before. I stood up from the sofa and called out to Elni, who was hiding her face behind the book for some reason.
“Elni, I’ll go pick up Luna.”
“Huh!? I’m not sleeping! Not at all!”
“…Sorry for interrupting you. Don’t mind me and go back to sleep.”
Only for now I refrained from retorting. With a touch of worry, I headed for the front door.
There I ran into Hijiri, who just came down the stairs. As soon as she saw me, she asked me doubtful.
“What’s up, Shinobu-kun? You seem to be in a hurry…”
“Yeah, I just called Luna, since she was late, but she was behaving a bit weird. I’m going to pick her up now. Thanks for helping Nazuna with her studies.”

Quickly telling her, I turned around right away and left the house. However, before I turned around, I could see it for a moment… Hijiri's somewhat sad expression. For some reason I couldn't get it out of my head and I hurried towards Luna like that.
"Ah, Shinobu-san."
Suddenly from the front came Luna's somewhat glossy voice.
When I immediately turned to her, there was Luna being supported by an unknown woman's shoulder.
…Luna aside, who was that woman?
The unknown female had extremely finely chiselled features and was likely in her late 20s. Emitting a somewhat composed aura, she looked at me while still supporting Luna.
On the other hand, Luna brightened her face and got away from the woman, rushing over to me.
"You came to pick me up, Shinobu-san. Thank you. I am so happy."
Hugging tightly onto me along with an erotic tone of voice, her oversized breasts pressed onto me. Following, she sweetly kissed both my cheeks as a greeting with no time for me to stop her. Moreover, she even tried to kiss my ear, so I hastily stopped her.
"…I did not get to touch Shinobu-san's ear."
Luna become dejected for some reason.
I certainly got excited from the elasticity of her breasts and the softness of her lips. But right now I was more concerned about Luna's behaviour.
Seriously, what was up with her?
I was gravely bewildered, whereupon the unknown woman got close to me and tilted her head doubtful.
"Are you the rumoured Shinobu-san? The Shinobu-san that Luna-chan described as always composed, cool, gently, moreover sometimes cute and sexy while telling funny jokes…?"
"Yes. I'm the rumoured Shinobu-san. Were you surprised how I was not less than the rumour?"
"In a way, yes."
…Probably in a bad way. There was no doubt, judging by her expression. I slightly shrugged my shoulders, whereupon Luna pulled on the sleeve of my clothes jerkily.

“Shinobu-san, this pretty lady is the manager of my workplace. She is really kind. Everyone calls her ‘perverted Manager’ and adores her.”
“…So she was a pervert, huh. Somehow her appearance doesn’t give that off at all.”
Actually, why was she adored, even though she was a pervert?
I considered it a bit dubious, but ignored it for now.
She might know why Luna was behaving so strangely. I send my gaze to the woman— the manager.
“I would like to ask how Luna turned out like this. Please tell me if you know anything. For a while now, she’s behaving a bit weird, right?”
“Well, Luna-chan is cute, even when weird, but actually a girl from the restaurant brought souvenirs from her trip overseas today. So after work, we all ate these souvenir chocolates. Up to this point everything was still fine, but…”
Averting her gaze slightly awkwardly, the manager scratched her cheek lightly.
“It seems the chocolate was filled with alcohol. So Luna-chan got completely drunk and made a fuss about you with red cheeks the whole time, which was just too cute that I wanted to take her home with me like that to get her on my bed and spent— *cough*. That was just a verbal slip. Forget about it.”
“Hey, there’s no way I can do that. Just try to do anything funny to Luna. Even the composed me won’t stay quiet about it!”
“Ufufu, sorry, Boy. I already touched Luna-chan’s bottom numerous times. I’ll let you touch my bottom as an apology, so cheer up— wait, I was partly joking, so don’t make such a frightening face. I’m really surprised. Your eyes look like you have killed three people…”
Mhm, she was a rather rude pervert.
I myself had completely forgotten to use respectful speech too, but how could she say that with a straight face. I frowned and was a bit hurt at heart, whereupon Luna quietly shifted her gaze to the manager and brightened her usual gentle eyes with a glaring flare.
“How can you say that…. Manager. Shinobu-san is not frightening. Why would you say something so hurtful to him? I will be angry, you hear?”
“S- Sorry, Luna-chan. I won’t say it again. The Boy is cool.”

“Yes, I am happy that you understand his good parts.”
A complete turn around from her sadistic glowing eyes. Luna showed her usual gentle smile. In regards, the manager was seriously frightened, different from the time with me.
In that moment, I suddenly remembered the words my mother once uttered.
She had said, “Luna-chan is surprisingly suited for a Queen” “The boss of the house is obviously Luna-sama” and “At night she becomes a gently sadist”.
…S- Somehow my hands got a bit sweaty.
While I was a bit unsettled, the manager sent her gaze towards me with a still pale face.
“Well then, Boy, Luna-chan is all yours. Don’t you dare to do anything improper to a drunk girl, you hear? But if you plan to, don’t forget to invite me too. I’ll join you. Or rather, I’ll intrude. Drop by my place for a bit.”
“Like hell we will. Go home already. Disappear this instant.”
“…Somehow, this cold glare and words gave me the chills. Give me more.”
In spite of the harsh joke I carelessly cracked like I would do with Asada,
the manager surprisingly was in a rapture.
Showing a somewhat bewitching expression, the manager writhed. It was a bit sexy, but scary. I quickly took Luna’s hand and turned my back to the manager without hesitation.
“Let’s hurry home, Luna. It’s dangerous to stay here. I’m worried that her perversion is contagious.”
“…That’s rude, Boy. But that’s okay. Scold me some more. You alone will be fine, Boy, stay over at my place tonight.”
Ah, a female version of Asada.
Her nickname perverted Manager wasn’t just for show. We should quickly escape. I easily attracted weird people like her— I remembered that my mother said that before.
Therefore, I took my distance from the manager while still holding Luna’s hand and we quickly reached our home road, but… instead of the

perverted manager, the more pressing matter might haven been the natural erotic big sister.
It must have been because she was drunk.
Luna clung to my arm again and used every chance to kiss my cheek, ear or even neck. Even without a mirror, I knew that my face was red.
“Fufu, Shinobu-san, you are bright red.”
“Apparently the cool me has become perfectly hot.”
“My body feels somewhat hot too.”
Replying with these bewitching words, Luna strongly clung to me along with an innocent smile.
…Her usual physical contact grew more intense, but once in a while this side of her might not be all too bad. While getting excited from her conveyed heat, I showed a wry smile.
“It’s nice that you’re in a good mood, but you didn’t cause the other girls troubles, did you? I hope you didn’t kiss them in your trance.”
“Of course not. I only kiss people I love.”
As soon as she declared surprisingly clearly, Luna placed another sweet kiss on my cheek.
“…You sure love kisses.”
“Yes, very much. I do not get tired of it even after numerous times.”
Showing a fascinating bright smile, Luna changed her tone into a gentle one.
“I get happy on every kiss. Knowing that there are people, who accept my kisses without getting angry, makes me really happy, so I want to do it countless times. Because I always envied it… as a child…”
With still a gentle tone, Luna quietly lowered her face.
“In my childhood, everyone responded to their mothers, who gave them kisses with either ‘Have a safe trip’, ‘Welcome back’ or ‘I love you’…I was envious. I always wondering why only I could not do that, why I did not have a mother. But now…”
Slowly breaking off her words, but not breaking the gentle tone,
“Now I have people I love around me. One dream of mine was granted. Therefore I am no longer lonely.”
Luna’s smiling face blossomed like a flower when she raised her head.
She might have been able to talk about that now precisely because she

was drunk. But I strongly felt that I was glad to get to hear it.
The stained daughter that was left behind by a whore. A gentle devil that was unwanted and unloved. Luna… who never could act spoiled with anyone.
She was opening her heart to me. She was acting spoiled towards me.
Most likely I was included in the mentioned people she loved.
That fact, brought a heat to my chest.
However, on the other hand, suddenly the somewhat sad expression from Hijiri floated in the back of my head. And her words about loving me.
I couldn't get her expression or words out of my head. Indecision spread in my hot chest. But, I quietly reached out my hand… and petted Luna's head.
Upon that, Luna smiled happily and I felt her soft body warmth on my palm. That warmth slightly eased the burden on my chest, but the pain didn't disappear.
But somehow hiding my feelings, I endeavoured to act as normal as possible.
Then we quietly advanced for a while, whereupon Luna suddenly stopped and pointed straight at the park in her vision— Midorikawa Park.
"Shinobu-san, can we drop by there for a bit?"
"I'm afraid it's too late now, so some other time."
"…I will kiss you on the lips when you do not agree."
"Interesting. Bring it on— Ah, no wait, just kidding. Let's take the detour."
I nearly had my lips stolen.
Luna was pushy on a rare occasion.
Dragged on my hand by her, I moved to the park with a wry smile.
Walking to the back of the park while side-glancing the various playground equipments, my vision fell on a small river, whose surface reflected the moon. Benches stood in it's vicinity. In the empty park, Luna and I sat down on the nearby bench.
Actually it would have been better to go home, but it was quite rare that Luna was being selfish. Tonight I would accompany Luna until she was

satisfied. Imitating Luna, I raised my hand and watched the beautiful moon floating in the night sky, whereupon
“Shinobu-san, do you remember?”
Luna calmly started to talk with a soft tone.
“Do you still remember the first time we went out together after our reunion?”
“…To be honest, I’m sorry about back then.”
“Fufu, Shinobu-san, even when I asked you to just call me just Luna before we went out, you said things like ‘I’ll call you like that at least in my mind’ or ‘If you keep being so selfish I’ll add another ‘san’ and call you ‘Luna-san-san’.’, which was a bit cold.”
“I’m really sorry. I’m reflecting on my actions. It was my youthful indiscretion.”
“You are still young, Shinobu-san.”
Lightly poking my cheeks, Luna carefully chose her words.
“But on that day, you petted my head at the park saying ‘It’s okay to cry’ and told me ‘Welcome home’ once we got back to the house. Despite that, I started crying and couldn’t tell you. At this point it may be too late, but…”
Temporarily stopping her words, Luna flushed her cheeks and smiled.
“Shinobu-san, thank you very much for back then.”
“…You don’t really need to thank me. Besides, I should be thanking you. It has become more fun than before, because you came to our house.”
“I am enjoying every day too.”
Happily making an agreeable response, Luna narrowed her eyes pleased.
“Speaking of, it has nearly been half a year since we met again.”
“Time sure flies by…”
“Indeed. But in this half a year, you changed a bit, Shinobu-san. Your tone has become somewhat softer, you are kinder than before and you have become really strong.”
“…I can’t really tell myself.”
But if I had changed, it surely was thanks to Luna.
When I thought back on it now, I might have been in a constant hurry during the long period after Luna’s stepfather Bram erased my

memories.
Irritated by my weak self with only envy in my chest, I always demanding what I lacked.
I wished there was something only I could do, but in the end I couldn't find anything. I had no talent for martial arts like my sister and just hated my weak self.
But it was different now.
Because I made a promise with Luna, I could become stronger than before. I could return to my grandfather's dojo from which I had fled once. I didn't go bad from my weakness… and could come to like myself.
Reuniting with Luna on that day and living together with her made my feelings from my childhood gradually grow stronger with every contact with her in my every day life.
I could no longer lie about it.

As I thought, I— love Luna.

This feeling was stronger than in my childhood. I wanted Luna to always stay by my side. But I didn't want to tell Luna this feeling, my *answer* at this place.
…I believed that the one I was supposed to tell the first about this feeling was Hijiri.
But, what kind of face would Hijiri made when I told her my answer?
"…How burdensome."
Mumbling with both my fists clenched, I looked up to the night sky, whereupon Luna softly leaned her body against mine with quiet sleeping sounds, as she had fallen asleep while I was in thoughts…

* * *

The time passed quickly after the day Luna got drunk, getting to the night before the date.
Enjoying the meal with everyone, I returned to my room after my bath.
In front of my closet I pondered for a while.
Tomorrow was the date, so if possible I wanted to outgrow myself a bit

and dress up.
But I had no real confidence in my fashion sense, so I was looking through my closet lost, whereupon my window opened without previous notice and Kaorun showed up with a smile.
“Good evening. I came by to play again.”
“Farewell. Please leave again.”
“So cruelly cold!?”
“…Nah, sorry. I was just joking.”
I actually wanted to urge her to use the front door, but Kaorun received a light shock. I leaked a wry smile and beckoned her.
Then Kaorun entered my room and frowned a bit.
“Good grief! Why the indifferent reaction, even though an angelic maid like myself is coming by? You are as cool as ever, Shinobu-sama.”
“I hear that a lot.”
“Uhm, please do not lie so boldly.”
“It’s not a lie. Look at me without any dogmatism or prejudice. I’m obviously cool. What’s left if you take the coolness away from me?”
“…Nothing is left at all.”
“Hey, don’t be so rude. Give it some more thought. There should be something else.”
“Like what for example?”
“Let’s see, for example, well, you know… My evil look?”
…I said it myself, but it was quite saddening.
“Shinobu-sama, do not become so self-tormenting. Certainly your look is not one of the best. I am also aware that people call you the ‘Harem King’ behind your back at school. But please cheer up. You are even allowed to touch my bottom.”
“Hell yeah… As if. Encouraging or fooling around, choose only one. Actually, why do you know my nickname?”
“It just happened to reach my ears. Please do not concern yourself about it. At any rate, rumours sure are untrustworthy…”
Stopping her words with a sigh, Kaorun then raised a discontent voice.
“What is the meaning of ‘Harem King’! What a horrible distortion! Even though I worked so hard to bring attention to ’natural Gigolo’! I am so disappointed!”

“I’m disappointed in you! What’s going on in your head! So it was you, who spread the weird rumour!”
“No, no, Shinobu-sama! I was merely joking just now. It was not me! Please calm down a bit! If possible, please stop being angry too! I will even hold you tightly!”
“…I guess I’ll strangle your neck with a tight hold as well then?”
So I said, but there was no way I would do something like that, so for now I just left it at grinding my fingertip into Kaorun’s cheek.
However to my surprised, Kaorun seemed to somehow enjoy it.
Moreover, upon noticing my scattered clothes in the room, she made a fantastic suggestion with a smile.
“Shinobu-sama, if you like, should I choose your clothes for you? It is for tomorrow’s date, correct? You appear to be troubled, so please leave it to me.”
“…I appreciate the offer, but I hope you don’t plan to make me wear something weird?”
“Fufu, rest assured. The usual charming Shinobu-sama would naturally look good in any clothes. How about you wear a sailor uniform to try it out?”
“Hey, hey, you’re really skilled at leading people into something… Is not what I’m going to say. What choice of clothes is that. I would make the acquaintance of the police before my date.”
“That is not true. When you wear the same outfit like before, you will be fine. Besides I think it will make Hijiri-chan and Luna-san happy.”
…I didn’t want to admit it, but I couldn’t fully deny it. I got the feeling that my cross-dressing was greatly popular with the girls. But a date in cross-dress, huh…
While I shuddered on the unintentional imagination, Kaorun stood in front of the closet and I thought she would fool around again, but against my expectations, she had a serious expression.
“Shinobu-sama, this T-shirt is better. Please change your trousers as well. Take this belt along with it. As for accessories…”
Like this she seriously selected my clothes and after I changed into them with her urging, I looked at myself in the mirror and inadvertently leaked an admiring voice.

“Ohh, this is going to get me popular with the girls.”
“Excuse me, Shinobu-sama. You would do better to stop your delusion and take a proper look at reality in the mirror…”
“Hey, hey, don’t be so cruel. Reality is harsh. At times you’ll want to look away from it. I can’t do anything about my evil look.”
“I wonder if that is really true? You seem to have resigned already, Shinobu-sama, but I have a good idea. It will soften your evil look in no time.”
“Oh, you’re going to call Doraem*n or what?”
Excessive hopes gave birth to deep despair. When I followed Kaorun’s behaviour with attentive eyes, she pulled out nothing unusual, but mere glasses.
“…Truth be told, unknown guys whispered ‘When Nanjou-kun puts on glasses and combs back his hair, he’ll be a perfect Yakuza’ behind me back…”
“Muh, how mean. If I had been there at that time, I would have shortened the lifespan of these guys a little bit. But well, that aside.”
She got angry, even though it wasn’t about her, then she exceptionally readily brushed it off and held out the glasses to me with a jerk.
“The proof of the pudding is in the eating, Shinobu-sama. Please believe in me instead of some strangers. You will be fine as long as you wear these fake glasses. Please put them on gallantly and let me hear a heart-skipping remark.”
“…Leave it to me.”
Trust was important. As soon as I took the glasses from Kaorun, I put them on without hesitation. After fleetingly shifting my gaze to the mirror, I pushed up the bridge of the glasses with my middle finger and gave an intellectual posing remark just like that.
“Lately I’m attracted to a certain colour. Yes, the brilliance of intelligence— Marvelous Orange. Whoops, guess that was a bit hard to understand for you?”
“…For some reason I am strangely irritated now. Can I smash these glasses in front of you, Shinobu-sama?”
“S- Stop it. The glasses are innocent.”
I hastily stopped Kaorun.

When I faced the mirror again, the expression of my eyes had softened more than I thought as a result of the glasses and to say the unvarnished truth, I was kind of moved.
“These glasses are quite good. With them, I might no longer be scared and get depressed after looking into the mirror first thing in the morning. I apologize, so please don’t break them.”
“Uh…! To think you had such a bitter experience! I deeply apologize for teasing you about your evil look until now! I just had no idea!”
For some reason Kaorun suddenly was moved to tears while pressing her hand onto her mouth.
Apparently she got sad, even though it wasn’t about her, but it was troubling how she brushed it off so readily again. For now I ignored Kaorun. I wanted to hear the other’s impressions. Still wearing the glasses, I left my room with high spirits and walked down the hallway. There I ran into Luna right away with great timing.
But for some reason, Luna brightened her face upon seeing me and then dyed her cheeks rose-coloured.
“What is the matter with these glasses, Shinobu-san?”
“Yeah, Kaorun recommended them to me just now. So I tried them on. Now I feel really smarter.”
Pushing up my glasses with my middle finger again midway in my sentence, I composed cracked a usual joke.
“Can a human live on intelligence alone? I want to find out.”
“…Wonderful…”
Leaking an erotic sigh, Luna enchanted her eyes with ecstasy. An reaction beyond my expectation. Completely different from the reaction that Kaorun showed earlier. It seemed like various heart marks were dancing around Luna.
“Uhm, Luna? It was just a joke, you know? It troubles me when you praise me like that. Feel free to laugh with ‘Disgusting’.”
“I cannot do that! You are not disgusting, Shinobu-san! Even just breathing, you are cool!”
“I- I certainly find that hard to believe…”
Once more bewildered by Luna’s reaction, I showed a wry smile and continued.

“But could it be, you have a thing for glasses?”
“No! That is not the case! I like them because you are wearing them!”
Tightly clenching her fists, Luna stressed out lightly excited.
Strange. I was still bewildered, but to be honest quite happy.
“W- Well then, I guess I’ll wear them for tomorrow’s date.”
“Ehm, that is…”
Even though she was that delighted, on my words, Luna put her index finger against her cheek for some reason and started to ponder. After showing a moment of inner conflict, she reserved grabbed the sleeve of my clothes.
“Shinobu-san, if possible, could you leave off the glasses tomorrow? You certainly look wonderful with glasses. But I love the usual Shinobu-san better after all. Besides, tomorrow’s date is…”
Midway Luna’s words didn’t enter my ears anymore.
…She loved my usual self better.
That sentence deeply engraved into my heart.
Affection straightaway aimed at me.
Was it the same as Hijiri’s?
Hijiri said that she loved me. I heard the same words from Luna now. Of course Luna’s love might be in the meaning of a family. But my heartbeat accelerated in the hope of “What if?”.
“Shinobu-san? Are you listening?”
Luna suddenly peeked in her head, so I inadvertently backed off one step in surprise.
“What is the matter? You were kind of absent-minded. And your face is a bit red.”
“I- It’s nothing. I was just a bit charmed by you. Don’t pay it any attention.”
“…Eh? Uhm, if you say something so wonderful, it really attracts my attention…”
For some reason Luna blushed and fidgeted her index finger against each other, but I dared to ignore it with “Well, that’s it”. I swiftly returned to my room in an escape.
There was Kaorun, as she waited for my return.
She was sitting on the bed and lovely hugging my pillow against her

chest, but as soon as she noticed me, she turned bright red and raised a complaining voice.
“Wh- Why so suddenly! That is rude! Please knock at least!”
“Ah, sorry. I just— Not! Why do I specially have to knock to enter my own room. You’re the rude one here. Who do you think you are!”
“…I might be Cha*lie’s angel.”
“As if!”
Well, she certainly was a beauty though…
I added so in my heart, whereupon Kaorun put the pillow she was hugging to the side and quickly changed the topic with still red cheeks.
“Anyhow, where did you go, Shinobu-sama?”
“I talked a bit with Luna in the hallway.”
“Did the glasses bear any effect?”
“Yeah, quite so. But that Luna—”
“I understand. Do not say anything more. You want to make a gigolo-like remark with ’That Luna was just too smitten by my glasses that I thought that I better embrace her’, correct?”
“Exactly.”
When I told a complete lie on the spur of the moment, Kaorun shrugged her shoulders disappointed and leaked a small sigh.
“…Shinobu-sama, I know that I brought up it myself, but please do not overdo it with the jokes. Knowing you, you ran away with some kind of excuse after you turned embarrassed from being unexpectedly praised to the skies by Luna-san, correct?”
“Correct. I’m impressed you could tell. Just laugh if you want.”
“Then I will gladly take you up on your words, but what kind of laughter do you prefer? A despising one? A mocking one? Or maybe a scorning one?”
“…Each of them would hurt me all alike, so don’t do it after all.”
Replying so with a wry smile, I quietly took off the glasses.
“Sorry, but I’ll return these glasses to you, Kaorun. After talking with Luna, I changed my mind. I won’t wear them for the date.”
“…Did Luna-san tell you anything?”
“Well, you know, Luna said she liked the glasses, but my usual self was even better. So I’m fine the way I am. I hate being feared due to my evil

look, but there are people like Luna, who understand me well. That's enough for me."
"I see…"
Making a gentle agreeable response, Kaorun smiled lightly.
"Fufu, you do not seem to notice yourself, Shinobu-sama, but right now you are making a really happy face. Good grief, Luna-san is impressive as ever for making you have that kind of expression. I am a bit envious."
A faint sadness was mixed in her calm tone and Kaorun clouded the smile she was showing.
"Luna-san feels for you and you feel for Luna-san, but Hijiri-chan is also looking at you, Shinobu-sama, so this situation might be hard on you. Recently you look a bit anxious. However, I…"
Most likely she must heard the story from Hijiri. Kaorun lightly clenched her fists and squeezed out her words hesitant.
"I would like you to put off your answer."
These words came as a big surprise to me. I thought for sure that Kaorun would support Hijiri. But apparently I was wrong.
"I like our current relationships. You included, there are a couple of people here that I hold dear. I get the feeling that our current relationships will end when you speak out your answer, Shinobu-sama. I am… scared of that."
Quietly casting her eyes down, Kaorun leaked a faint sigh.
"I believe that Hijiri-chan holds a familiar feeling to mine. The reason she turned a bit reckless on the recent showdown most likely was her worry. Both Hijiri-chan and I hold you very dear, Shinobu-sama. But different from my ambitions as a maid, Hijiri-chan wants to be with you some more. She keeps trying her best to make you look at her."
Kaorun's soft tone. It became quieter with every word and she continued with "However" in a fragile tone.
"Even without dating you, she can stay by your side. You would accept that, right Shinobu-sama? Is wishing for us all to stay together like we have so far… Just my selfishness?"
"…I'm sure you know without me telling you."
Kaorun's wish was her and *my* selfishness.
"I feel the same as you. I really like our current relationships. So I was

also scared of breaking it and couldn't come up with an answer."
…I once again abstracted it with an ambiguous attitude.
"But I can't avoid it forever. If I keep running away by putting off the answer, someday I'll run into a dead-end, which surely will end up breaking our current relationships. I plan to tell Hijiri my feelings in the near future."
Stopping my words by breathing out a bit, I looked straight into Kaorun's eyes.
"Our relationships might change a bit from now on. But it doesn't mean that our bonds will be erased completely. I properly want to keep these bonds, but just by myself I'm a bit unconfident. If possible, will you lend me a hand?"
"…I have a condition."
Smoothly opening her mouth, Kaorun wrapped up my hand with hers.
"Please let me stay by your side, regardless of the answer you come up with. Please pet my head occasionally. And if you allow me to come over again to play around like this, then I will promise to help you out, Shinobu-sama."
Rather than a condition, it was closer to a request. I nodded firmly and softly reached out my free hand for Kaorun's head.
"Come by whenever you like. I'm happy too to have you by my side. That said, I want to you to come in through the front door at these times…"
Ending my words with a little joke, I gently petted her head, whereupon
"…Are you sure?"
Kaorun softened her expression in reaction to my joke.
"I will not be held responsible if you regret this immediate answer later on. I am a perverted maid, as you call it. There is even the possibility that I follow you around like a stalker, you know?"
"Hey, hey. You don't lie so boldly either. You actually have no intentions to stalk me, right? Well, though I wouldn't mind if it's you."
"…You natural Gigolo."
It was a somewhat sulking tone, but Kaorun's cheeks were quite red.
When I continued to pet her head, she was meek for a while, but as she grew embarrassed, she got away from me with still red cheeks and

changed the topic to distract.
“R- Reminds me, Shinobu-sama, you were quite concerned about the clothes for the date, but I hope that you do not have forgotten to give the important date plan some thoughts?”

“It’s okay. No worries. I’m the kind of guy that hears twice, thrice and even four times before speaking once, but doesn’t say anything in the end. I made a thorough and detailed plan—That’s at least my public statement.”
“Uhm, one question for this kind of troublesome person: Why do you not just state your real intentions?”
“My real intention is to entrust it to my passion. I plan to deal with it cool like always with a bit of wildness at times. Just going to the aquarium will leave us some time, so after consulting with the others, we decided to go skating as well.”
“Skating, it is? Your delusions in the first part aside, going skating in this season is a good idea. You usually fall flat, so you must be experienced in skating.”
“Hey, certainly my jokes sometimes fall flat, get ruined or ignored, but I actually have the ability to move the audience.”
“…Without doubt you have the ability to move the audience to the exit.”
“Do you want to make me cry?”
While cracking such jokes together, we chit-chatted for a little while, whereupon Kaorun suddenly searched her pocket with “Ah, right”, as she remembered something midway in our conversation, and took out an alarm clock with a drawn maid picture.
“A present for you, Shinobu-sama. Please feel free to use it tomorrow already. It would be too dreadful to behold when you oversleep and are late for the date. I remodelled it a bit, so it should surely satisfy you.”
“Okay, I’ll put it to use right away tomorrow. Thanks.”
Technically I already had one alarm clock.
But I should honestly accept her good-will. When I said my thanks, Kaorun showed a roguish smile with “You are welcome” for some reason, then headed towards the door of my room.
“Well then, it is about time I excuse myself…”
Stopping exactly in front of the door, Kaorun turned around and made a beautiful curtsy.
“Good night, Shinobu-sama. Sweet maid dreams.”
“Yeah, good night. I pray that no perverted maid will appear in my dream.”

“Fufu, no matter how many prayers you offer, in the end once on shore, you pray no more. Since we are talking about me, I believe that I will show up in your dream undoubtedly. Moreover, I will quietly sleep next to you when you wake up. The unexpected appearance of the girl in question. Both in dream and reality I will please Shinobu-sama to the—”
“Nah, enough of the jokes. Get going already. Hijiri will worry.”
Cutting into her words with a soft retort, I watched over Kaorun leaving the room, then I set the alarm clock that I got from her. I decided to go to bed early in preparation for tomorrow…

Chapter 03: Separated Warmth

It was a bit cold, but with a bright morning sun that reminded you of a sunny sky. The refreshing morning of our date. What disturbed my peaceful slumber was
“Ahn! Noo! Stop!
a sudden charming and bewitching voice that echoed through my room, which made me jump up perplexed.
“Wh- What? Someone here? Just what are you doing in my room!”
When I straightened up my upper body and looked around at the same time, the alluring voice continued lewdly without pause.
“Yahn… Just not my bottom… Hahn… Stop… Shinobu-samaaa!”
The sweet voice calling me was the alarm clock that Kaorun gave me last night. Apparently it was the type that allowed a voice record.
“Please… show some restrain, Shinobu-sama… Ahn… This out in the open… Hyahn… My voice is leaking… Mm… If someone… hears this voice—”
“I would be done for without doubt!”
Like I would stand for someone getting the wrong idea.
I immediately slammed my palm on the button on top of the clock, stopping the weird alarm. Following, I wiped the cold sweat from my forehead and made a small sigh.

…That damn perverted maid, she pulled outrageous pranks as ever.
Well, it woke me up for sure. It was also a fact that I got kind of excited.
Besides, I believed that Kaorun was just seeking attention with her own way of fawning on someone.
But I should properly caution her next time.
As such thoughts crossed my mind, now my cell phone rang. Kaorun was calling me.
"…Hello?"
"Mm… If someone… hears this voice, we will be found… Kyahn… It is so embarrassing… Shinobu-sama, you pervert…"
"Kukuku, so you say, but it looks like your body can't wait anymore, you know? In truth, even you want—"
"Shinobu-sama, please stop the sexual harassment. Otherwise I will report you right away. You are so shameless early in the morning."
"That's what I want to say!"
I had wanted to play along with her joke to retort later, yet she prevented me from doing so at the worst part. Now I was just a pervert. I regretfully sent my gaze to the alarm clock.
"What kind of behaviour is that so early in the morning? What's the idea behind this alarm clock? Or rather, I hope you don't have any listening devices in my room."
The timing of her call was just too peculiar.
While I watched around my room once more, Kaorun gave me the morning greeting "Good morning, Shinobu-sama" through the phone. She changed her tone into a softer one.
"Just for the record, I have not set up any listening devices. I just somehow sensed your agitation, Shinobu-sama, so I tried calling you. Could it be, it happened at a nice timing?"
"Cruelly so."
"Fufu, I am glad that I could meet your expectations. This is all possible through the power of love."
"…What an annoying power. I'm already weary of it. I don't want such a love."
"Well then, Shinobu-sama, to make you accept my glamorous love, I will sneak into your room next time and change the recording of the

alarm clock into a kitten-like little sister play one, or even into a mother play one that gives the impression of a snappy beauty.”
“Are you threatening me? If Nazuna or my mom were to hear that, it would result in a incredible awkward family meeting. So please, don’t do it.”
I was relatively serious. But Kaorun on the other hand giggled and readily changed the topic.
“—Now then, jokes aside, Shinobu-sama, please get ready for your date already. You are not allowed to go back to sleep and be late for the date, you hear?”
“…The hero always shows up late.”
“Okay, stop there. Since you are trying to go back to sleep by laying down on your pillow this very instant, Shinobu-sama, I will tell you something good. Therefore please get up properly.”
“Nah, I was just joking, but… what’s that something good?”
“Truth be told, the alarm clock I presented you is set up in the way that even when you press the button on the top, it will ring the alarm again unless you turn off the switch on the side.”
“…That ain’t good at all. Launching a time lag attack, what a fearsome alarm clock.”
Most likely she wouldn’t allow me to go back to sleep. That said, I had no such intentions today. I ended the call with Kaorun and stretched myself a bit on the bed.
Then suddenly there was a knock on my door and Machina came into the room unforeseen. As soon as she spotted me, she showed a slightly surprised expression and then smiled softly.
“Morning, Shinobu. I thought you would still be sleeping, but I see that you managed to wake up yourself today.”
“Impressive, right? I really tried my best. Praise me kindly.”
“…What are you blabbering? You ain’t a kid, so it’s natural to wake up by yourself. Could it be you’re still dragging on the baby play from the other day? So you really seek a motherly figure…”
“Machina, currently I don’t seek a motherly figure, but your retort. Do your usual. And I would be grateful if you could forget about that baby play stuff. It’s even more traumatic for me than cross-dressing.”

When I dropped my shoulders with a sigh, Machina softly reached out her hand towards me and petted my head comforting.
“Good boy, good boy.”
“…Okay, it might be your idea of cheering me up, but to be honest, it has the opposite effect. What’s with that strangely warm smile? Don’t treat me like a kid.”
It was embarrassing, as I was teased subtle.
For now I escaped from her warm hand, whereupon Machina suddenly shifted her gaze to the alarm clock on my bed, tilting her head doubtful.
“Is that alarm clock new? Somehow I get the feeling that the maid picture on it resembles Kaoru a lot. Did you buy it?”
“No, actually Kaorun came over to my room last night to play—”
“Yahn! I only came over to play, yet you dragged me all the way out here…! Aahn, you cannot, Shinobu-sama. I will end up leaking a lustful voice. Mmm…”
Cutting into my words, Kaorun’s bewitching voice sounded from the alarm clock once more.
…Not good. I totally forgot about the time lag attack. I turned pale and stopped the alarm at the same time, but it was already too late.
Machina’s lips were trembling.
“Sh- Shinobu! Just what did you do with Kaoru last night!? And even recording that voice of hers into your alarm clock! Just how much do you love maids!”
“No, wait, you’re wrong! It’s a misunderstanding!”
“Misunderstanding, my ass! Don’t lie! I already know that you love maids! You’re drooling when my sister wears maid clothes! And you always enjoy talking with Kaoru so happily! Just what’s so good about maids!?”
“…Their submissive service to their masters?”
“Wh- What the! I don’t have either of that!”
I carelessly leaked my true feelings by forgetting my situation, whereupon Machina protested with teary eyes.
“Besides, if you want someone to listen to your every request, then get a computer program instead of a maid! I’m sure it’ll be more effective!”
“You’re wrong, Machina. The charming point of a maid is that she

obeys you of her own free will. A program can't imitate that."
"I, I see. Maids are so profound— Not! To begin with, isn't the perverted maid Kaoru the exactly opposite of your beloved submissive type? That you did weird things to Kaoru despite that means that you just have a thing for females in maid clothes, doesn't it!?"
"No, no, I don't really have a fetish for maid clothes…"
How could I clear up this misunderstanding?
Machina made a face close to tears while blurting out "I'll wear maid clothes too! So play with me more often!". I became even more panicked, whereupon my cell phone rang again, as Kaorun called me again.
"…What do you want now?"
"Well, I suddenly felt like maids were being made fun of, so I tried calling you."
"Do you really have no listening devices here? What kind of sixth sense is that. Machina indeed said something on the lines of 'A program is more efficient than a maid'…"
"Ah, please apologize! Please apologize to all maids and maid fans in the nation! Looks like I need to explain the merits of a maid to Machina! Please pass the phone over to her!"
"…Yeah, okay. And while you're at it, tell her about how you gave me the alarm clock yesterday. She perfectly got the wrong idea about it."
Asking Kaorun so and handing my cell phone over to Machina, I waited and observed for a while, but after a few seconds already, Machina furrowed her brow to whatever conversation they were having.
"Kaorun's heartfelt weather forecast for today? I'm not interested in that. Eh? What? Don't make fun of maids? Jealous Tsundere? Wh- Who are you calling a Tsundere! Eh? A contest? You'll give me maid clothes when I win? Fine! I'll accept by all means! Today for sure I'll win over you!"
…Really, what kind of conversation were they having? After the call, Machina said "I'm going out for a bit!" as soon as she handed me back my cell phone and turned her back to me, rushing out of the room.
Seeing that behaviour made me get the feeling that the misunderstanding wasn't completely resolved.

While watching over Machina's back, I inserted a sigh and decided to get ready for the date…

* * *

The meeting place was the fountain at the station. It might be the best spot for meet-ups, since the huge fountain served as a landmark. There were a lot of men and women in my vision, who all were probably waiting for someone.
But, as I came way earlier than the appointed time, Luna and Hijiri still weren't here. By the way, my mother and the others recommended Luna to preserve the feeling of the date, so in the end she would rendezvous with me at the fountain too.
To be honest, I didn't get a woman's heart about this stuff, but it was a long-awaited date. Today at least I would put aside my worries and make some good memories with the three of us. Right now I thought it would be fine to face Hijiri's feelings after that…
When such slightly serious thoughts crossed my mind, I suddenly felt a presence behind me. Apparently someone was sneaking up on me from behind.
…It might be Luna.
Luna actually loved physical contact. I was sure she would cling to me from behind and ask "Guess who?".
I believed she was in high spirits due to the date. But it was slightly embarrassing in public. I felt bad for her, but I would be laying in wait. Therefore I went as far as to keep feigning ignorance while waiting for the right moment.
"Guess…"
"Wait a—"
Abruptly turning around, I extended my arm with attitude to stop her, but… a squishy sensation spread on my palm and I inadvertently stopped my words.
A voluminous breasts that didn't fit into my palm. A bewitching "Mm…" moan. And both my eyes fell on Hijiri's appearance with red cheeks.

…Ah, it wasn't Luna. I would have never guessed that Hijiri would try a Guess-who. Actually, didn't I do something offensive right now?
Completely taken aback by the unexpected situation, I froze up with my hand still on her breast, whereupon Hijiri didn't show any signs of anger and opened her mouth softly.
"You really love breasts, Shinobu-kun…"
Yeah, in the current condition with my hand on her breast, any words of denial I could utter would without doubt only sound empty. I wanted to pull my hand back from Hijiri's breasts and apologize at once, but
"Uhm, Shinobu-kun, how does… my breast feel?"
Without time for me to stop her, Hijiri overlaid both hands on mine with still red cheeks and showed a worried expression after leaking another sweet moan.
"They aren't as big as Luna-san's, but do they still feel good?"
To be frank, it was awesome. The elasticity of her plump breast was pleasant on my palm and it was quite seductive how the breast softly changed shape on my and Hijiri's hands. When I nodded back shortly to her question, Hijiri smiled relieved.
"I'm glad. So I wasn't the only one, who felt good…"
…These words already cracked my reasoning. It was dangerous at this rate.
I felt uneasy like that, but it seemed that Hijiri had no plans to continue this any further too, as she likely was worried about people's eyes. A bit regretful, she tried to remove my hand from her own breast— At that very moment.
"…Sh- Shinobu-san, Hijiri-san, what are you doing in a place like this?"
Suddenly a soprano voice that resembled a crying voice sounded.
While feeling all the blood leaving my head, I turned around together with Hijiri, whereupon there stood, like expected, Luna with teary eyes.
Instantly, I hastily removed my hand form Hijiri's breast and warranted.
"Th- This isn't what it looks like, Luna! Don't get the wrong idea!"
"He's right, Luna-san! Please don't get a weird misunderstanding! It's just an accident!"
"…Is that true?"
With still teary eyes, Luna asked doubtful.

“You both looked kind of happy, you know?”
“W- Well, I’m a boy after all. It’s true that I considered it a lucky accident. Sorry, Hijiri.”
“No, there’s no need for you to apologize, Shinobu-kun! It’s all my fault! The manga I borrowed from Kaoru-san yesterday had a Guess-who scene! I believe it was wrong for me to try mimicking something untypical for me!”
Apparently Hijiri was quite agitated. She hastily talked on and on.
“I was certainly happy too! When Shinobu-kun touched me, my chest got hot and I considered his hand warm, big and pleasant! I’m aware that I did something bold! But I never planned to do anything funny! I just—”
“S- Stop, Hijiri. We’re in public. You better stop now.”
“Th- That is right, Hijiri-san. I understand very well that it was an accident. Do not worry anymore, okay?”
Each of us cutting into Hijiri’s words, me and Luna rested our hands on Hijiri’s shoulder mostly at the same time, whereupon she turned bright red, as she noticed that she was making an unnecessary coming-out, and looked down.
“…Sorry. All I do is so embarrassing.”
“No, you don’t need to apologize either.”
“Shinobu-san is right. Actually I was thinking of doing Guess-who too. Just like me, you could not suppress your anticipating for the date, right? So do not get depressed and let us enjoy the date.”
“…Okay. Thanks, Shinobu-kun, Luna-san.”
When she raised her head, her cheeks were still red, but Hijiri was showing a smile.
Attracted by that, Luna and I smiled faintly as well and then, to enjoy our date at once, we took the train— to a certain sports center with a skating ring.
Entering the center, Luna sparkled her eyes with “It is my first time at skating”, but after putting on her ice-skates, her eyes started flickering with anxiety and right now she was standing indecisive in front of the skating ring.
“Uhm, Shinobu-san, I sometimes trip on even grounds, but… will I be

fine here?”
“You’ll be fine. No problem. I’m sure your bottom will fulfil it’s role as a cushion.”
“Sh- Shinobu-san! My bottom is not that big! Please take a closer look!”
“…Sorry. I was joking. Please forgive me.”
“Shinobu-kun honestly apologized at once!?”
No, Hijiri, I can understand your surprise, but look at that well-formed bottom lightly pushed out to me. Even if I wanted to continue the joke, words wouldn’t come out.
I replied so to Hijiri at heart, then shifted my gaze back to Luna and suggested.
“If you want, I can teach you how to skate.”
“…Shinobu-san, you can skate?”
“Of course. Even if I don’t look like it, I was… the older brother of my sister, who was once called the Ice Fairy!”
“Ehm, Shinobu-kun, that’s not something to be proud of, you know?”
“Well, you know. As Kaorun said it, I usually have a slippery mouth, so I should be good at skating too.”
The instant I went with the flow and threw out some self-destructive joke material to distract, Luna and Hijiri gently petted my head. Now I seemed really pitiful. After shrugging my shoulders lightly, I changed my tone into a bit more serious one.
“The jokes aside, I was skating a few times before at least. So I think I should be able to teach Luna. What about you, Hijiri?”
“Yeah, I can skate too, so let’s teach Luna-san together.”
After confirming that Hijiri nodded with a smile, I softly reached out my hand for Luna.
“Here, when you hold my hand, you won’t trip. For now let’s try a run.”
“Right. Let’s start with getting used to the ice at first.”
When Hijiri too reached out her hand in agreement with me, Luna took our hands, albeit a bit nervously, and hand-in-hand we three headed into the skating ring.
By the way, the ring had a diameter of about thirty meter and when Luna, still pulled by Hijiri and my hands, slid on the ice for some time, the tension gradually vanished from her expression and she slowly

started to smile.
“How’s it, Luna-san? Quite fun, isn’t it?”
“Yes. It is really fun. But Hijiri-san, please do not let go yet, okay?”
“…Luna, if I carelessly let go now, would you get angry?”
“Sh- Shinobu-san! Do not say something so scary! Please stop!”
When I asked half-teasingly, Luna clung onto my arm while tears dwelled up in her ears, whereas Hijiri showed a wry smile and rebuked me softly with “Stop it, Shinobu-kun”.
Well, while such a thing happened, I let go off Luna’s hand for a test after she calmed down, whereupon to my surprise…no, calling it surprisingly might be rude, but against my expectations her good athletic senses made her not trip even once and she slid normally on top of the ice.
On the other hand, Hijiri, who watched over Luna together with me a bit apart, widened her eyes a bit and then leaked a voice of admiration.
“Luna-san is impressive. Even though it’s her first time…”
“Heh, I no longer have anything to teach her.”
“Uhm, why are you sounding like some old man?”
“I just wanted to say it once. Don’t worry about it.”
“Fufu, I see. You’re such a joker, Shinobu-kun. Really cute…”
…Being called cute really made me bashful. I should change the topic quickly. While scratching my cheek, I shifted my gaze towards Luna.
“Oh look, Hijiri. Luna has the knack of it. She’s even waving now.”
“You’re right. She looks a bit frolic— Mh? Huh? Doesn’t her face look kind of pale?”
“…It certainly is pale. And for some reason, she has even teary eyes.”
Suddenly we felt something amiss, whereupon Luna trembled her voice faintly with still teary eyes.
“Shinobu-san~ Hijiri-san~ Like I thought, these skates do not have breaks, do they?”
“D- Don’t tell me, you can’t stop?”
“That is right! Please help me! I am a bit scared!”
Luna sent us a SOS in a panicked sate. She had quite the speed and it would be a disaster if she crashed into the boards. I spread both my arms right away.

“Lu—”
“Come here, Luna-san! I’ll catch you!”
…Aw, everything I wanted to say was stolen by Hijiri.
Now my spread arms were kind of pointless.
While I felt a bit awkward and my cheeks got hot, Luna drew near to Hijiri with quite some drive. In regards, Hijiri properly caught her in her arms— or so she planned to, but it certainly was impossible on the ice. She lost her balance on the spot and fell down together with Luna. But seeing as she perfectly absorbed her fall, she most likely was unharmed. But, in a different meaning something outrageous happened to them. Hijiri was laying face-up. Luna was taking a posture of hanging over her. Their big breasts were perfectly laying on top of each other, each changing shape squishy. Moreover the instant Luna moved, Hijiri leaked a bewitching voice.
“Mm… Luna-san, if you move like that… Ahh… Stop…”
“I am sorry, Hijiri-san… Fuhn… I cannot… Hahn… stand up properly…”
While Luna desperately tried to stand up on the ice, her breasts, different from her intention, pressed down even more strongly and slowly rubbed left, right, up and down.
“Yah… Don’t, rub… there… Ahn…”
“No… Mha… It is not… Uhn.. on purpose…”
Contrary to Luna’s efforts, the four breasts seductively turned with undulating sways and sometimes the girls trembled their bodies with a shiver.
It was a scenery I would like to remember— But it wasn’t the time to stare like that. The nearby other skaters started to make some ruckus too. Returning to my senses, I approached Luna and Hijiri at once and softly reached out my hand…

Afterwards, Luna quickly got better as the practice paid off and after we enjoyed some skating together, we took a late lunch at a family restaurant. Then at the end of a few minutes of rocking in the train, we visited the aquarium next.

Getting entry with the tickets from my mother in our hands, we went inside together.
Upon that, the interior was shrouded with a wondrous, blue atmosphere and I could confirm couples here and there. Then Luna and Hijiri stopped in front of a nearby fish tank, where each of them were fascinated by the swarms of sardines swimming in it.
An individual small swarm of sardines crowded together and looked like single life-form. Sparkling like a glittering jewel, their figures moved vividly and fast.
I was inadvertently captivated as well and Hijiri too leaked a sigh of admiration.
“Amazing…”
“Yeah, they look really delicious.”
“Well then, Shinobu-san, shall I make fish for tonight’s dinner?”
I carelessly ended up making a foolery like Elni, whereupon Luna replied with a smile. I actually had wanted her to retort, but for now I decided to keep the joke going.
“Then I want fat tuna Sashimi.”
“If you give me a kiss, then yes.”
“…Sorry. I was selfish. Also, please retort already.”
Luna smiled roguish.
When I lowered my head, Hijiri giggled with a “You don’t hold a candle against Luna-san” comment. I didn’t deny it in particular and after leaving the sardine swarms behind us, we slowly walked around in the aquarium.
Luna sparkled her eyes while watching the colourful tropical fishes, whereas Hijiri took a subtle distance from the scary looking deep-sea fishes
“They’re swimming so happily.”
and gave the deep-sea fishes a smile.
Luna’s expression changed frequently and when I was fixated on her before I noticed it, I suddenly felt a gaze on me and turned around…
Hijiri was looking at me somewhat sadly.
“What’s wrong, making such a face? Could it be, you’re feeling sick?”
“Ehm, that’s not it. I was thinking that you’re kind…”

“Mh? Of course I am.”
Hijiri sounded somewhat diverting, but she really didn’t seem to be unwell. I replied to her with a firm nod.
“I don’t grow tired of watching Luna and you too looked kind of scared of the deep-sea fishes just now. Sorry, but that was a bit funny.”
When I told her so partly joking,
“…So you were properly looking at me too…”
Hijiri softly took my hand after mumbling quietly.
There Luna noticed my situation too and imitated Hijiri by taking my other hand with an animated voice.
“Shinobu-san, your hand is so big and warm.”
“Yeah, it’s a bit rugged and the skin is thick, but I like Shinobu-kun’ hand.”
“I like it as well. I would love to hold it forever.”
“Yeah, that would be nice…”
While talking so, Luna and Hijiri showed a smile.
…My hand had, like Hijiri said, thick skin due to my martial arts practice and some small scars stood out as well. Despite that both of them said they like it, which made me embarrassed, but I couldn’t dare to pull away my hand.
Their heat I felt through the palm slowly suffused my heart.
Around us were various fishes swimming in the blue fish tanks. We three just quietly walked through the peaceful atmosphere while holding hands.
…That alone made me happy right now.
Suddenly I harboured the impossible dream of never letting go of these hands. I was seriously hesitant to let go off only one of either hands and I couldn’t help but wish to keep their warmth on my palms forever…

After going around in the aquarium, we decided to go watch the dolphin show, which we saved as a last entertainment. We got onto the show grounds and sat down in the front row, then the event started after a while, whereupon the cute dolphins showed themselves and Luna and Hijiri smiled spellbound together.
“The dolphins are so cute.”

“Indeed…”
“Did you know? Dolphin is spelled with ‘Sea’ and ‘Pig’ in Kanji. I wonder why with pig?”
“Just why are dolphins so incredible cute…”
“It’s a mystery…”
“Uhm, girls? Please listen to me, okay?”
Actually, don’t exclude me. When I embraced a kind of bitterness in my heart, Hijiri and Luna continued their talk while still ignoring me.
“Reminds me, I wilfully asked my father and mother to let me keep a dolphin as a kid, which quite troubled them.”
“You did something like that?”
“It happened when I was really small. It should have been obvious, but I was depressed about not being able to keep a dolphin, so Kaoru-san made me a dolphin plush toy. I was really happy about that and I still keep that plush toy preciously.”
“I knew it, Kaoru-san is really kind. She resembles Shinobu-san a bit.”
“You think so too, Luna-san?”
Not noticing how I frowned, Hijiri heartened up her voice a bit.
“Bad at expressing her own feelings honestly, shy and trying to brush off things with a joke. She’s the spitting image of Shinobu-kun in these points.”
“Their cool sides are also alike.”
“Yeah, right. Also…”
While saying so, Hijiri and Luna had fun talking like this while ignoring the dolphin show.
…Didn’t they want to watch the show?
I inadvertently tilted my head in contemplation, but interrupting them would be tactless. Before I noticed it, even I had forgotten about the show and was smitten by Luna and Hijiri’s smiles, whereupon I suddenly could confirm a dolphin finishing a high jump at the edge of my vision with a huge splash.
At this rate, the girls would get wet.
For now I should get Luna— when my thoughts reached that far, my body momentarily stopped moving.
…Why was I trying to cover Luna? Did I think Hijiri would be fine by

herself? Hijiri certainly was athletic. She might be able to dodge with her intuition in this situation.
But this spontaneous decision… tightly corded up my chest.
If in the future, I would have to let go off just one hand that I was holding earlier and could only protect Luna, I would—.
Various thoughts floated in the back of my brain in mere moments. I was hesitant and faltering. But in the end, my extended hand didn't pull Luna closer…I stood covering in front of *the two of them* with both my arms spread, then I felt a cold sensation on my face in the next moment.
…Likely because of the season, but the drops of water running down my cheeks were unusually cold.
It might be that I got a divine punishment, because I kept taking a vague attitude. While I leaked a silent sigh, Luna hastily stood up.
"Shinobu-san, are you all right?"
"Geez, I totally turned into a sexy wet T-shirt model."
I hid my feelings with a wry smile. Contrary to Luna, who worried pulled out a handkerchief, Hijiri averted her eyes for some reason.
"…It turns out like that after all…"
She spun her words with a fragile voice.
Her whisper didn't reach my ears and she remained at her place, not intervening with us at all when Luna wiped my cheeks with her handkerchief. She simply clenched both her fist like she was enduring something and just smiled somewhat forced.
…I didn't know what she was thinking, but her expression resembled a crying face and without finding words to tell her, the dolphin show ended at some point. And after the show, we parted from the aquarium without holding hands under the evening sun that started to show up…

There were hardly any other passengers on the train back home, so it cruelly quiet and somewhat lonely. I could hear the clattering of the train and Luna's calm sleeping soungs.
She must have been tired from playing around. Luna was leaning her cheek against my shoulder and Hijiri continued to look out of the window wordless, but suddenly she said isolated.
"…Shinobu-kun, thanks for today."

“Mh? Why so suddenly?”
Hijiri quietly replied to my nonchalant question without taking off her gaze from the window.
“It was really fun. Until now I never thought I would get to hang out with my crush and a precious friend like this, so it’s like a dream… It was truly enjoyable.”
Despite her calm tone, I couldn’t see her usual dignity on her profile.
“…But, one day you’ll wake up from an impossible dream, ending it. Even though I knew that for a long time already…”
Blurring her voice faintly, Hijiri shifted her gaze to me after a long silence.
“Actually, at the time of the water splash at the dolphin show, you… actually wanted to cover Luna-san, right?”
“…What makes you think that? I wasn’t really—”
“You don’t need to be considerate to me.”
Softly cutting into my words, she showed another smile through tears.
“I noticed it at the splash. I was watching you. Because I love you, my eyes always chased you. Therefore I can tell, at whom you were looking… I knew long before… yet… I…”
Biting on her well-formed lips, Hijiri cast her eyes down.
“Sorry, Shinobu-kun. I would like you to keep up with my selfishness for a little bit longer…”
A modest request leaked from her trembling lips. Before I could answer it, there was an announcement in the train. We had to get off at the next station. Having lost my timing, I closed my opened mouth, whereas Luna rubbed her eyes and said, as she woke up from the announcement just now.
“…Excuse me for falling asleep. Where are we right now?”
“We’re just getting to our station. So it’s better you stay awake.”
“Yes…”
Even while replying to me with a nod, Luna still looked sleepy and was kind of absent-minded, but she seemed to have completely woke up when it was time to get off the train. Also, Hijiri showed nothing of her earlier expression and continued to chit-chat with Luna happily.
At that time, Luna’s cell phone suddenly rang from her pocket.

Upon that, Luna pulled out the cell phone with widened eyes, mumbled "It is from the Manager" and doubtfully answered the call after excusing herself from us.
Judging by the word Manager, the call must be from that pervert.
"…Hello, Luna here… Eh? Is that so? Yes… I am at the station right now… Ehm, please wait a moment."
Temporarily removing the cell phone from her ear, Luna looked at Hijiri and me.
"What's the matter?"
"Well, it was a call from my part-time job. Two people who are supposed to have a shift today are absent with a cold. And if possible, she wants me to fill in now…"
"Then I guess you better go, Luna-san."
Hijiri gently declared to Luna, who was checking our reaction.
"We have no more plans and even if we hang out some more, you wouldn't be able to enjoy it, since you're worried about the job, right? Let's end today's date here."
"…You are right. I understand. Thank you."
Replying to Hijiri with a smile, Luna pressed the cell phone against her ear again and after ending the call,
"Then I will head to the restaurant now. Shinobu-san, Hijiri-san, let's go on a date again."
Luna headed for her part-time job by leaving these words behind. On the other hand, Hijiri waved her hand small while seeing her off.
"….Another date, huh."
Leaking a faint whisper, she smiled somewhat sad.
Afterwards, Hijiri quietly bid me farewell, turned her back to me and walked away.
But for some reason, her back appeared cruelly small and until that appearance completely vanished from my vision, I remained standing there…

* * *

—I would like you to keep up with my selfishness for a little bit longer.
I couldn't get Hijiri's words out of my head. The whisper hinted at an ending. I believed that Hijiri already noticed my feelings.
Almost a week past since that date.
In that time, weird rumours spread at school like always, but I approached Hijiri normally and in the short time between periods at least, I continued to face my emotions to reply to *her feelings*.
However, I probably should put an end to it at this point. Keeping this up any longer might just hurt Hijiri instead.
Sunday evening. Hijiri was in the living room of our house. Apparently Elni was going to show off the magic tricks she learned lately, so she invited Hijiri over.
By the way, Luna was at her part-time job and Machina announced her abstention by saying "I don't to become the guinea pig for Elni's magic tricks anymore" with a weary expression. In addition, Kaorun seemed to have other plans and the Elni in question was preparing in her room with Nazuna and her friend Miichan, so right now I was alone with Hijiri in the living room.
Amidst that, Hijiri sat on the sofa together with me and tilted her head while pressing her index finger against her cheek.
"Still, why did Elni start to learn magic tricks?"
"Ah, apparently she did it, so she can teach Nazuna."
…I'll put off telling her my feelings until after the magic trick show.
It might be better to bring it up when I escort her home.
While thinking so at heart, I answered her question.
"Nazuna's friend is going to run for the student council and Nazuna was entrusted with the election campaign, where she'll to use the magic tricks."
"Magic tricks for an election campaign? What can I say… Th- That's unique."
"Why don't you speak out what you thought: It's weird."
"B- But, it does have impact. You know, most people won't know about the candidate, so it's important to make an impression. Besides, Nazuna-chan is cute. I would give her my vote."
"No, it's not like Nazuna herself is running for the election. She's just a

supporter. I just hope she won't make a bad impression and trouble her friend…"
Even while I said that, I wasn't actually worried that much. Nazuna was fundamentally liked, no matter how she screwed up. If needed, her friend could stop her too, so it should be fine.
When such thoughts crossed my mind,
"Speaking of the student council elections, our own are about to start too."
Hijiri suddenly said so, then raised a matter with "Actually,".
"I'm invited into the student council election too."
"Invited… for a support speech?"
If that was the case, I got the feeling that she better pass on it.
I predicted that when a beauty like Hijiri stood on the stage, no amount of support could prevent the actual candidate from going under instead, unless having a charm on Machina's level.
I showed a wry smile upon imagining it, whereupon Hijiri shook her head a bit and replied.
"Shinobu-kun, not for a support speech, but as a candidate. Sorry, I was a bit imprecise. The other day, the current student president asked me to become the successor."
"…You're amazing as always."
Well, Hijiri was popular and respected at school and even had a strong sense of responsibility. I believe she could become the ideal student president.
"But what are you going to do about it? Will you run for it?"
"…I turned it down once. There's the matter with my job and even club activities. I don't know if I'll get elected, but if I do become the student president, I'll have less time to be with you. That's why I turned it down. But the student president still hasn't given up and keeps passionately asking me, so I'm a bit lost."
Less time to be with me.
A small pain ran through my chest upon hearing these words.
Things might get somewhat awkward and it might even be hard to stay as friends like before when I speak out my answer.
If my time with Hijiri decreased like this… it would be tough after all.

I reached out my hand for Hijiri with these feelings.
"…Student president or not, I'll always help you out, no matter what happens."
"Yeah, thanks, Shinobu-kun."
When I petted her head with the sentiment of wanting to stay as friends, Hijiri smiled somewhat sadly and leaned her cheek against my shoulder, albeit a bit hesitant.
"…It certainly does feel good. You're the only one who pets my head like this outside my family, Shinobu-kun. If possible, I would like to stay like this forever…"
Even while softly narrowing her eyes, the sadness didn't vanish from her expression.
When I continued to pet her head nevertheless, there was a knock on the door of the living room to change the atmosphere here and a girl with a warm-hearted aura showed up by saying "Excuse me".
She was Nazuna's best friend, Miichan aka Sakurai Mizuki-chan.
That she, who helped Elni prepare, came here might mean that they finished their preparation. But Elni and Nazuna weren't with her though.
While I tilted my head perplexed, Miichan got teary eyes for some reason as soon as she noticed us.
"A junior should have it's own charming point…"
Convincing herself like that and tightly clenching her fist, she approached me and quietly sat down besides me, then she leaned her cheeks against my shoulder like Hijiri, albeit hesitant.
"Ehm, Miichan? What's up?"
While tilting my head once more, I tried petting her head with my free hand for now, but for some reason Miichan dropped her shoulders dejected.
"Uhh… The patting is completely different. Just like between an adult and a child. Would I have gotten a different petting if I were tall as Hijiri-san and had big breasts like Luna-san?"
Leaking bitter words, Miichan looked envious at Hijiri.
By the way, Hijiri and Miichan met once before.
It was before the sports festival, when I went out together with Hijiri and Minami after they made me cross-dress. There I ran into Miichan and

her friend Tamaki. And apparently Miichan held a strong admiration for Hijiri, but also a quite thin rivalry.
“I also want to become a cool and dignified grown-up woman like Hijiri-san.”
There she showed a warm-hearted expression, miles away from dignity.
Still continuing to pet her head, I opened my mouth softly.
“That aside, Miichan, did you guys finish the preparations for the magic show? Where are Elni and Nazuna?”
“Ah, yes. All arrangements are done… I think, but it seems Elni-san isn’t mentally prepared yet. She was reading a book about magic tricks together with Nazuna and told me to go ahead. But I believe the two of them will come down soon.”
“…Can I get my hopes up?”
“O- Of course!”
Contrary to her reassuring tone, Miichan averted her eyes for some reason. Seeing her reaction, I shrugged my shoulders lightly, whereas Hijiri showed a bittersweet smile while shifting her gaze towards Miichan.
“Mizuki-chan, Elni asked me with ‘I’ll show you some magic tricks, so tell me your opinion about them’, but is that for Nazuna-chan’s support speech? Does Nazuna-chan really plan to show magic tricks at the support speech when we give our thoughts on it?”
“It is a really fantastic idea, isn’t it! Elni-san is amazing. Arisugawa-san, the candidate who asked Nazuna-chan for the support speech, raised a happy scream too with ‘I‘m speechless!’ after hearing about the magic tricks.”
“W- Was that really a happy scream?”
Changing her bittersweet smile into a wry one, Hijiri asked reserved, whereupon Miichan replied with a nod.
“Arisugawa-san said ‘Nothing less from my rival! I did not think of that! Now the seat of the student president is practically mine! Oh~hoho!’ with her usual loud laugher. She was really happy.”
…That girl was a bit stupid too.
When a somewhat rude thought like that crossed my mind, I suddenly remembered.

If I was right, Arisugawa-san's first name was Chihaya and she was the girl, who picked a quarrel with Nazuna at the sea side school. Reminded me, Nazuna was quarrelling with Chihaya-san at the department store during summer vacation, but unknown to me they got closer and became good friends?
While I tilted my head yet again, this time Elni and Nazuna showed up in the living room, as their preparations were finally done. Nazuna looked kind of worried and in regards, Elni greatly puffed up her chest with confidence.
"Thanks for the wait! The Goddess is here! The other day a fortune teller comforted me with 'It's just a simple fortune telling, so don't worry about it'! Therefore I'm not worrying about it at all!"
"You are so wild, Elni-san!"
"So cool, Elni-chan!"
Miichan replied with loud applause to Elni. Nazuna showed a smile. In contrast to them, Hijiri intensified her wry smile.
…I didn't know what horrible things the fortune teller told Elni.
But apparently the person in question really didn't worry about it.
Nazuna held out the silk hat she had hidden behind her back and Elni put it on without hesitation. She pulled out cards from her pocket, shuffled them cool and dived them into two stacks on the table, then she shifted her gaze towards Hijiri.
"Okay Hijiri, I'll show you an impressive magic trick now. Pick any card you like. After you confirmed what card it is, put the card back without showing it to me."
"O- Okay…"
Still with a wry smile, Hijiri drew a card on Elni's instructions and I casually snuck a peek at her hands. Mhm, the card was an ace of hearts.
When Hijiri put the card back after confirming it's kind, Elni combined the two stacks of cards and shuffled them quickly. Then she handed Hijiri a single card along with a fearless smile after spreading the cards.
"Fufu, the card you drew… was this one, right?"
"…Eh? Ah, yeah! That's actually right! H- How did you know? You pulled off an amazing magic trick so let's put back the card now."
As soon as she looked at the presented card, Hijiri averted her eyes and

lapsed into fast-talking. The instant I snuck another peek at her hand with a doubtful feeling, Hijiri quickly pressed the card against her voluminous breasts
“Y- You can’t, Shinobu-kun! Please don’t look!”
“What’s the problem. Not like you’re losing anything from it.”
“Still, you can’t! I can’t show it to you!”
“…If you’re that against it, I certainly…”
“Give up already?”
“Nah, it actually makes me want to see it even more.”
“D- Don’t touch it! Stop it, Shinobu-kun! Please! Don’t look!”
“Hehehe, resist some more, ‘cause that turns me on.”
Making suspicious kneading movements with both my hands, I cracked one of my usual jokes, whereupon Elni, who had watched quietly so far, stared at me and mumbled isolated.
“Somehow, when I’m just listening to you two, it sounds like Shinobu is a pervert that is forcefully doing something lewd to Hijiri against her will. Just like a beast.”
“…I’m unexpectedly wild, right?”
Cracking another joke in desperation, I casually reached out my hands for Hijiri.
There Hijiri turned bright red from the commotion, so I could easily snatch away the card from her hands, but
“Ehm, Elni, Hijiri drew the ace of hearts. Not this is four of spades.”
Dropping my gaze onto the card, I reluctantly pointed out the mistake, whereupon Elni hung her head dejected and seeing that, Miichan and Nazuna raised an encouraging voice.
“Do not worry, Elni-san! Everyone makes mistakes!”
“Just like Miichan said! It’s okay, Elni-chan! This falls under warming up! Don’t worry about it and show the next trick!”
…Would it be all right to continue with the next one, even though her warming up screwed up already?
I inadvertently wanted to interject like that, but retorting now might be indiscrete. Elni tilted her head with “Strange. It worked with Nazucat…”, then somehow got her enthusiasm back and pulled out silver-glittering handcuffs from her pocket this time.

…It were trick handcuffs, right? For that, they looked quite well made. Completely different from the plastic toy model. I couldn't tell the difference to real ones. After spinning these handcuffs around with her finger, Elni opened her mouth triumphant.
"Okay, these handcuffs in my hand are genuine ones, who are as sturdy shackles as they appear. Once you put them on, the only way to remove them is with the keys. Next I'll show you a magic with these handcuffs. Okay, that cool person over there, could you come over for a bit?"
"Looks like it's my turn."
"No. Sorry, Shinobu, but I didn't mean you, but Hijiri."
"…Damn, I screwed up."
As Elni replied with a serious face, I felt bad for interfering and readily pulled back.
There Hijiri stood up in response to Elni's beckoning.
"Ehm, what should I do— wait, Uwah! Wh- What are you doing?"
Midway in the sentence, Elni put the handcuffs around Hijiri's right hand with a click and next she pointed at her straight.
"Hijiri! You always hide a Japanese sword in your bamboo blade pouch! I arrest you on the charge of violating the weapon control law and being a sullen pervert! Give up yourself!"
"I, I'm not a sullen pervert! Wh- What's this all of the sudden! To begin with, I need my sword for my job, so I properly have a license for it!"
…Exorcists like Hijiri were allowed to carry swords?
While my interested was piqued a bit, I fleetingly shifted my gaze, whereupon I saw the profile of Miichan, who faintly frowned. She might have gotten sceptic about Hijiri carrying a sword. Miichan placed her hand onto her chin with an unusual serious expression.
"…It certainly needs a bit of drama like this for the magic show at the support speech. The similarity to Mag*-san made it funny. What do you think, Shinobu-oniisan?"
"I think Ma*y-san is really funny."
Apparently my fear was ungrounded. Miichan changed her expression into a smile. When I replied to her with a vague smile, Elni faced me and beckoning once again.
"That natural Gigolo over there, come over for a bit."

“Now that was rude.”
While giving a soft retort, I stepped forward, whereupon Elni put the handcuffs around my left hand wordless.
Mhm, in no time I was tied to Hijiri with handcuffs. The chain of the handcuffs was rather short and a faint fragrance of flowers hung in the air next to me. It was a nice fragrance, but it was awkward and unsettling.
“…Elni, I didn’t do bad, did I?”
“No! You stole something very precious! My heart!”
“Want it back then?”
“D- Don’t give it back! It would ruin the story! For now put it into a vault or something!”
Turning around somewhat hurried, Elni threw a glance at Nazuna with attitude, as she still planned to keep up the play.
“Judge Nazucat! Your verdict for these two criminals please!”
“—Guilty!”
Nazuna judged us guilty with a smile. Hearing that, Elni shouted undauntedly.
“Judge Nazucat! I ask for a review of the verdict!”
“Still guilty!”
“Judge Nazucat! I’ll give you snacks!”
“Nevertheless guilty!”
“Judge Nazucat… I love you.”
“I love you too! But they are guilty!”
“Muh! I see that you insist on guilty no matter what, Judge Nazucat!”
“Well then, acquitted of charge.”
…What a fickle mood. While I became totally astonished, Hijiri smiled with “Nazuna-chan is really cute…” and Elni pulled out a handkerchief from her pocket with a side-glance to us, quickly covering the handcuffs with it.
“Okay, somehow I managed to get you acquitted, so I’ll remove the handcuffs with my power now!”
“…How do you dare to say that, when you selfishly handcuffed us!”
“With my mouth.”
“Oh my, what a cute mouth— Not! Good grief! Even making such a

cute face! Whatever, just take them off already."
"Leave it to me! I'll free you from the handcuffs with my magic! 1, 2, 3!"
Along with a super energetic call, Elni stripped off the handkerchief with attitude.
But, my vision fell onto… the still locked handcuffs.

“H- Huh? That’s strange.”
Tilting her head perplexed, Elni clattering fiddled with the handcuffs, as she was looking for a way to unlock them, but the shackles didn’t come off from Hijiri and my hand.
Upon that, Elni lowered her head apologetic.
“…Sorry. Looks like I failed again. I can’t get the handcuffs off with the magic trick. So I have no other choice but to use the key.”
While showing a somewhat bitter expression, Elni reached her hand into her pocket.
She must be searching for the key. Elni rummaged through her pocket, search in her breast pocket next and then searched her pockets again, turning pale in the end.
“H- Hey, why are you getting pale? Don’t tell me you lost the keys?”
“…I’m afraid so.”
The instant Elni said so isolated, Miichan and Nazuna approached Elni panicked as soon as their face turned pale.
“E- Elni-san, did you really lose the keys?”
“Not good, Elni-chan. If the keys are gone, who’s going to remove the handcuffs? At this rate, Brother and Hijiri-oneechan will be tied together forever.”
“…I would love that.”
Different from the confused girls, Hijiri mumbled quietly.
She was smiling, but her profile looked rather sorrowful…which made me be at a loss for words for a moment. But the other girls were here. I breathed out a bit and decided to behave like always for a little bit longer.
“Ehm, Hijiri, that’s certainly a bit troubling, isn’t it? Think about it. How are we going to take a bath like this?”
“…Indeed, I might not be able to wash your back like this.”
“No, no, before that, we can’t even take our clothes off because of the handcuffs. And there are other problems. What about sleeping?”
“I think it’s better to sleep together in this season. It keeps you warm. If you like, you can use my arm as a pillow.”
“…To be honest, I don’t want to bring this up, but, well, what about the toilet?”

“I, I’m sure we can somehow manage by both closing our eyes and covering our ears…!”
“No way. Sorry, but return to your senses.”
There was no need to force yourself to the extent of turning bright red like this. I leaked a wry smile and shifted my gaze from Hijiri to the handcuffs.
“Okay, it should be possible with this kind of opening. Gimme a sec. I’ll dislocate my joints a bit and do something about the handcuffs.”
“…Your joints?”
“Yep, the novel I read before wrote about it to remove handcuffs. I’ll try it out on this occasion. First I dislocate the metacarpals and proximal phalanxes. The small finger, then the thumb and middle finger…”
“St- Stop! Hold it, Shinobu-kun! I can’t let you do something so painful alone! To begin with, these are trick handcuffs, right? There should be some kind of mechanism to take them off! Isn’t that so, Elni!”
Stopping me, who was trying to dislocate my joints, Hijiri sent Elni a hopeful glance.
But, Elni just squeezed herself apologetic after all.
“I’m really sorry. I forgot how to remove them. But I borrowed the handcuffs from Kaorun, so she must know how and might even have a spare key.”
“…Moreover, if it’s her, it seems like she could even lock pick it.”
But apparently Kaorun had some other business and sadly wasn’t here.
“For now, I’ll try calling her just in case.”
After giving Elni an agreeable response, I pulled out my cell phone and decided to call Kaorun. Upon that, the call connected surprisingly fast and I could hear Kaorun’s voice right away.
“—Here a sudden question: Where am I right now?”
“In my heart, forever…”
“Uhm, please stop that, since it sounds like I am dead.”
“Sorry. I didn’t know the correct answer. Tell me where you are.”
“—I am Kaorun. Right now, I am behind you.”
“For real…”
It wasn’t unthinkable for Kaorun. I turned around to check… but I only made eye-contact with Nazucat. She tilted her head puzzled with

“What?”.
“Meh, you’re not behind me. So much for getting my hopes up.”
“You had your hopes up!?”
A surprised voice raised through the phone, then a faint sigh reached my ear.
“…Shinobu-sama, this is not a horror, so it troubles me if you wish for me this much. Please retort properly. Incidentally, I am on my way back from a job right now, but unfortunately I stuck in a traffic jam, so I do not know what to do with my boredom and hot body. Since you already called, please talk to me. Perverted topics are okay too.”
“I didn’t call you to have some lewd chatting. I’m in a bit of a pinch right now.”
“You do not know what to do with your lust?”
“Nope. I’m handcuffed to Hijiri right now. And we can’t get these handcuffs off.”
“…Lewd stuff right off the bat, I see. This delusional situation is possible in my opinion. That said, are you the type that wants to put on handcuffs? Or rather the type that wants to be handcuffed?”
“Neither. ‘Cause I don’t need handcuffs.”
“I see. In other words, you want to say ‘Even without handcuffs, I catch women with my great charm’. Such wonderful shackles— well, the jokes aside, what do you mean you are handcuffed? What happened?”
“Yeah, actually…”
Kaorun stopped her joke and corrected her tone, whereupon I explained the circumstances. When I hung up the phone after talking with Kaorun for a while, everyone looked at me awaiting.
“…No good. According to Kaorun, the mechanism of the handcuffs might be broken. She seems to have a spare key, but she’s stuck in a traffic jam. It’ll take some time until she’s back.”
When I told everyone the contents of the call with a shoulder shrug, Miichan and Nazuna frowned baffled together.
“Th- Then it means Shinobu-oniisan and Hijiri-san will be handcuffed together for a while? I am a bit envious— No, this is a serious problem.”
“Yeah. I’m sure Mom, Luna-oneechan and even Machina will get the wrong idea upon seeing them like this. Specially Luna-oneechan might

get a shock and cry."
…I didn't want Luna to cry. And it was annoying to have my mother or Machina misunderstand too. It mostly likely would take a lot of trouble to clear up the misunderstanding.
"Hijiri, for now let's retreat into my room. It would be bad if Luna and the others see us."
"Y- You're right. Let's hide until Kaoru-san is back."
As it was a precarious situation, Hijiri coloured her expression with tension.
There Elni suddenly raised a flustered, small voice.
"G- Guys! Trouble! It's Machina!"
"Ehh!? Now!? Let's run, Shinobu-kun!"
Hijiri reacted quickly on Elni's words. She either forgot about the handcuffs in her agitation or it was a conditioned reflex, but she instantly turned on her heels and started running with attitude at the same time.
…Normally that wouldn't have been a problem.
However, I couldn't keep up with Hijiri's speed.
My handcuffed hand was suddenly powerful pulled jerkily, so I lost my balance and my feet even tangled up, so I fell down while dragging Hijiri with me. Along with a loud noise, I felt two big, round swellings on both my cheeks. The squishy sensation on my cheeks were pleasant. But, these were without doubt Hijiri's breasts. As soon as I noticed it, I straightened up my body right away.
"S- Sorry in various ways, Hijiri! Are you hurt?"
"No, I'm fine. What about you? Sorry for running all of the sudden."
With no signs of anger, Hijiri looked at me worried. Her finely chiselled features were at a close distance. When my heart beat accelerated inadvertently, Elni raised another small voice.
"There's no time for this, Shinobu, Hijiri! Hurry up and run! I'll distract Machina!"
Calling out to us, Elni then stepped on the floor of the living together with Miichan and Nazuna. My eyes chased the direction, into which the girls turned to, the accordion curtain that separated the dining kitchen and living room. Through it's cap I could fleetingly confirm Machina's appearance. Badly enough, she was approaching into my direction

doubtful.
“Hey, what’s the ruckus about? I heard that Elni is showing magic tricks, but is it that funny? As I was her test object before, I can say it’s another fail—”
“M- Machina! Don’t come over here! Stop there!”
“She is right, Machina-oneesan! It is dangerous here!”
“Definitely don’t come over! Stay there, Machina-chan!”
Closing the distance in no time, Elni, Miichan and Nazuna stopped Machina with fast-talking. Machina apparently still hadn’t noticed us, as our laying on the floor was in her blind spot or we were hidden by the girls, who stretched themselves.
“Hey, are you hiding something? Why can’t I come over? If you’re doing something, let me in too.”
“Sorry, Machina! It are pressing circumstances! Please, don’t come!”
“It is quite complicated! Stop, Machina-oneesan!”
“Really sorry, Machina-chan! I’ll explain later! So for now, don’t come over!”
“…What the. I don’t know what’s up, but in the end, you’re keeping me out of the loop. Saying ‘Don’t come’ all together is too much!”
“M- Machina, no, you don’t need to cry…”
“I’m not crying! I’m used to this after all! I’m perfectly fine! Don’t say weird things, Elni!”
Contrary to her words, Machina looked incredible sad.
…Sorry, Machina.
While mumbling so at heart, I exchanged glance with Hijiri, who had an apologetic expression, then we snuck out of the living room.
Following, we approached the stairs with still sneaking steps, whereupon the front door opened with the worst timing and Luna showed up with a smile, as she came back from her part-time job.
“Ah, Shinobu-san, Hijiri-san, I am b…”
While saying a greeting, Luna froze up midway in that while still smiling.
Her gaze was fixated on our handcuffs. Okay, for now let’s wipe away the cold sweat and deal with it composed.
“Luna, listen calmly. I’m sure you’ll understand. There are really

complicated and pressing circumstances to this."
"Yes, I understand. Do not worry."
Against my expectations, Luna nodded unaffected and trembled her lips faintly while still looking at the handcuffs.
"That, is a wonderful bracelet."
…Luna perfectly averted her eyes from reality. Her eyes were somewhat empty too.
"But I must say, I having quite the weird dream. Shinobu-san and Hijiri-san are being handcuffed together, that is quite maniac. I have to wake up soon."
Showing a dry smile, Luna headed for the living room with staggering steps.
Then I could hear the heart-rending voices of Machina and Luna saying "Sister! Listen for a bit! The others are so mean!" "Fufu, don't worry, Machina. Everything is a dream." "…Uhm, why are you about to cry too, Sister?".
…I was quite concerned.
However, if even my mother were to see me like this, the ruckus would only increase. I felt sorry for them, but I left Luna and Machina to Elni and the others and swiftly headed together with Hijiri to my own room.

…I wondered if Elni and the others were managing well.
I was a bit worried, but hesitant to carelessly show up in the living room, I waited in my own room for Kaorun's return together with Hijiri.
During that, I once more checked the handcuffs. But in the end I didn't discover the mechanism and had Hijiri help me with my exorcist training upon her recommendation, so right now the talisman I manipulated was dancing around in the air of my room.
While watching that talisman, Hijiri smiled a bit.
"You're amazing, Shinobu-kun. Normally at takes a year, or at least half a year at best to make a talisman work… You indeed have a talent for exorcism. There might not be much that I can still teach you."
"No, that's not true. I still can't do any field work."
"That can't be helped. I said so earlier, but it takes time to master talismans. Then you also need knowledge about exorcist and devils, plus

martial arts. It usually takes three years of training to become an exorcist. You might get it done earlier, Shinobu-kun, but still…"
Hijiri closed her mouth with her sentence unfinished, but even though I considered it strange, I let the flying talisman return to my hand and decided continue the talk.
"Well, the exorcist training is quite fun, so I'll take it easy. But you say I have a talent for it, huh… I can't really tell that myself, but personally I wanted a talent for martial arts instead."
"Speaking of, you attended your grandfather's Dojo as a kid, right?"
"Yeah, that's right, but I actually fled from it once. Unlike my grandfather, father and Nazuna, I don't have a shred of talent for martial arts, so I was compared to them and made fun of, which was bitter… So I fled."
"Despite that, you always tried your best, right? You returned to the Dojo, got many scars on your body and kept working hard without giving up…"
A slight hesitation. While Hijiri tried to link to her interrupted words, I got a certain premonition.
She might be trying to ask for my answer. Then Hijiri broke the short silence by beginning to talk.
"Why did you start to get exorcist training, Shinobu-kun? I know that you're obsessed with strength. But why do you seek strength that bad?"
"…Because I have someone I want to protect."
The feeling I would speak out from my mouth would surely hurt Hijiri. But, I couldn't stop anymore.
I didn't want to deceive her anymore.
"I didn't return to the Dojo, which I fled once, to inherit it, but because I wanted to become strong, so that I could at least protect that someone, my beloved person."
"…I knew it."
Putting on a calm smile, Hijiri quietly leaked the words.
"When you said the other day that you have no intention to take over the Dojo… No, I already somewhat noticed it before that. Who you were looking at, who you were thinking of, who you wanted to protect… Actually, I knew. But, I still…"

Faintly trembling her voice, but not breaking her soft tone,
“thought that I could change it, so I repeated the weird seductions to get your attention…But it was no good. In the end I only caused troubles for you and could not change anything…”
She leaked a faint sigh and clenched her fists a bit.
“Your desire for strength isn’t normal. That’s obvious, because the person you want to protect, your beloved one… isn’t normal either…”
Fixing her grazed voice, Hijiri looked into my eyes and asked about my *answer*.
“Your beloved person is… Luna-san, isn’t she?”
“Yeah. I love… Luna.”
I finally spoke out my answer. It made Hijiri’s eyes blur faintly. But she never showed any tears and just created an earnest smile, uttering words of apology.
“Sorry. I’m sure my confession troubled you. You’re very kind and treat me well. You were always trying your best not to hurt me and kept going along with my selfishness, but sometimes you looked really painful… I’m really sorry.”
“…There’s no need for you to apologize.”
“No. I selfishly dragged you around and caused troubles for Luna-san too. I have to put an end to that now…”
The smile she was showing forcefully was faintly creaking and her voice trembled even more. Despite that she shed no tears from her blurred eyes and continued her words gently.
“I’m sure it’ll be fine when you tell Luna-san your feelings. It’ll definitely go well. I’ll… support you. I’ll make them… accept you two. From now on, I’ll always… always… be on your side, Shinobu-kun…”
Her trembling voice sounded just like a crying voice.
“Thanks.”
The moment I spoke out that mundane word, I noticed that my voice was greatly grazed too.
I wanted her to be by my side from now on too. But, let’s stay as friends— How would she take these words? Even if I told her these words, it might only hurt her.
So I couldn’t find any words despite wrecking my brains and while a

heavy silence hung in the air, Hijiri cast down her face at some point and just fixed her gaze on the handcuffs.
…What would happened to our relationship when these handcuffs were removed?
Time went on while I held a worry that I couldn't shake off and later, Kaorun came over, removing our handcuffs all too easily.
I got the feeling that my bond with Hijiri would be lost at this rate.
Hijiri waved her hand a bit on the leave. Her profile was really sad and the worry in my chest grew stronger. But unable to reach out my hand, I only watched her going away…

* * *

The school classroom into which the evening sun shone.
Giving the few students, who were still there and chit-chatting happily, a side-glance, I was just watching the darkening sky absent-minded while sitting at my desk.
Machina sitting next to me didn't say anything in particular and was quietly reading a book. She most likely was waiting for me to stand up to go home.
Even while a part of my brain thought so, I continued to watch the evening sun unchanged, whereupon the door of the classroom was opened with a clatter.
When I fleetingly shifted my gaze, there was Asada and upon seeing me, he showed a smile and called out to us with a casual tone.
"Oh, how rare to see you both still here, Nanjou, Orangelo-san."
"I'm just at the good part of the book. I can read here in peace."
"…Reading? Hee… And even a book about magic tricks. It's surprising that you're reading such a book, but actually you're just waiting out of worry for Nanjou, right? He's a bit strange lately. I cannot help but worry too."
Along with his words, Asada brought his face closer and stared at me with a serious face. He was quite close. It was disgusting how the breath of the pervert hit my cheek. Unable to hold back, I replied with a serious face as well.

“…You have the face of a pig.”
“I get that a lot.”
“You actually get!?”
“Anything wrong with that! Who cares! At least let me have my fun of being called a pig by a S&M Queen in my dream!”
“Hey, hey, you’re strange not just today, but every day. I can’t help but worry too. Go to the hospital at once!”
After cracking our usual hard jokes, Asada lightly clapped my shoulder and softened his tone a bit.
“Anyway, what’s up with you, seriously. Could it be you got scared of Gogyou-san’s fan club at this point? I told you before, but you don’t have to worry about it.”
Clapping my shoulder once more to reassure me, Asada took a peek at my face.
“You know, lately Gogyou-san seems busy and has been taking her distance from you, right? So the fan club has calmed down recently. Now’s a good time. Leave everything to me.”
“…I don’t know what you’re up to, but don’t be too reckless. And don’t do anything weird. Lastly, your face is too close, so disappear this instant.”
“Fufu, I just love this Tsundere side of yours, Nanjou…”
Getting away from me and mumbling to himself, Asada called out to the remaining classmates in the classroom, as he had business with them, and then left the classroom together with a couple of them.
…I was a bit curious about what Asada was scheming.
However, the pressing matter right now was the relationship between Hijiri and me. Asada was thinking that Hijiri was taking her distance from me because she was busy, but that wasn’t the actual cause.
Hijiri indeed looked busy these days. But, it happened right away she heard my answer. When our eyes meet, I could have a simple chat with her, but it wouldn’t be for long and Hijiri usually turned her back to me. It was just like we had returned to before our close contact.
Normally Hijiri was always surrounded by students and the focus of the conversation, where it was hard for me to enter that circle unless I had some business.

I was sure that I could talk to her because she stayed at my side.
So the envious of everyone and the anger of the fan club might be understandable.
However, it was pathetic how I only became painfully aware of Hijiri's popularity again after there has been a distance to her. I made a wry smile and leaked a sigh at the same time, standing up with dropped shoulders.
"Machina, let's go home."
When I faced her while hiding my feelings, Machina nodded small and quietly closed the book she was reading.
After leaving the school together with Machina then, we peacefully reached our home road, whereupon the dark evening sky had been covered by raining clouds before I noticed it and a somewhat eerie thunder sounded.
"…Sounds quite close."
"Indeed. Let's get home before it starts raining. I don't like thunder."
"Oh, you're scared?"
"I wouldn't say scared, just not comfortable with it. I only have bad memories with thunder. Because in the past my father was struck by lightning in the mountains and was about to die…"
"Didn't you also tell me at the seaside school that Bram nearly died drowning in the sea?"
"My father is always close to death. Like he was struck by lighting the moment he said 'Lightning rarely hits anyone. It's nothing to be feared as long as it doesn't hit. To begin with, a devil shouldn't be scared of lighting.' and eventually made my mother worry and cry. He's useless in so many regards."
Before I noticed it, it had become a grumbling about the old man.
Machina puffed up her cheeks dissatisfied with "I write him a letter, but he doesn't reply at all and even if he does…".
Actually I wanted to insert an agreeable response to her grumbling now.
But when the thunder reached my ears once more, I suddenly remembered that Hijiri was bad with thunder as well and Machina's voices gradually grew distant…
Reminded me, the night I spent at Hijiri's house after running away from

Machina's home cooking, there was a thunder like this too.
In the end, I got to stay the night at Hijiri's house on that day. Then Hijiri was scared of the thunder, came to me and before I noticed it, I was sleeping together with her in the guest room. In the morning we were found and teased by Kaorun, which was a bit troubling, but more so it was fun.
The memory floated loosely in the back of my brain.
Could I make more such memories from now on?
What if my distance to Hijiri grows further and I'll only be able to see her in my memories while her existence becomes something of the past one day…
"Mh? Shinobu? What's up?"
When I inadvertently stopped, Machina tilted her head doubtful.
"…Sorry, Machina. I have something to do. Go ahead of me."
"Something to do? But I'll start to rain soon. Does it have to be now?"
"I can't postpone it. I know you specially waited for me… Sorry."
"I, I was just reading a book."
While flushing her cheeks faintly, Machina reached into her bag and pulled a folding umbrella out of it, holding it up to me.
"Here, take it. I'll take your bag, so hand it over. I won't ask what you have to do, but if it gets late, make sure to call, okay?"
"Yeah, okay. Thanks."
Saying my thanks and taking the folding umbrella from Machina, I handed her my bag and ran back on the street we came from, albeit feeling sorry for her.
At this time Hijiri should be at the Kendo hall for club activities.
Hijiri seemed popular with the girls from the Kendo club as well, so she might not need my help. It was quite likely that someone would extended a helping hand to Hijiri, who was afraid of the thunder.
But, still, when I thought that she might need me, I couldn't stop my feet and when I passed through the school gate and arrived at the shoe lockers, there surprisingly stood Hijiri, whatever happened to her club activities. She had a somewhat pale face and I called out to her, albeit a bit hesitant.
"Yo, what are you doing here? What about club activities?"

“…Shinobu-kun?”
When she noticed me, Hijiri widened her eyes a bit, then answered the question quietly.
“I allowed myself to leave club activities early today. Same question at you. Did you forget something?”
Hijiri smiled awkward. I replied to her reserved.
“Not quite, but… if you like, want to go home together? Since there’s thunder and all. I’ll escort you home.”
“…Thanks.”
Nodding while still smiling, Hijiri lined up next to me and together with her I headed for the school gate. However at that point it finally started to rain, so I spread the folding umbrella from Machina and while walking shoulder to shoulder with Hijiri under the small umbrella, I asked softly.
“Hey, you didn’t tell your club members about your fear of thunder?”
“Yeah. Because it’s pathetic and I don’t want them to worry…”
“I see.”
She didn’t want anyone to worry, but when I stayed at her house, she properly relied on me. She acted spoiled with me.
The moment I thought of that, my heart became hot.
The thunder sounded from somewhere far away again and the rain got louder. Meanwhile I started talking.
“Somehow, it’s been a while, since I have been together with you like this.”
“I’m a bit busy lately. I decided to run in the student council election, so I think I’ll still be busy for a while.”
“…Student council election, huh. Then it can’t be helped. You have to prepare after all.”
Even while speaking out these words… my chest hurt.
Even though she said she wouldn’t run for the election, since it would decrease the time together with me…
Inadvertently I tightened my grip on the umbrella.
There Hijiri looked at me worried.
“Shinobu-kun, don’t just hold the umbrella over me. You’ll get wet.”
“It’s fine. Wet is sexy.”

Indeed, the folding umbrella was small and to trying to keep Hijiri dry, my shoulder got wet. But I cracked an usual joke unbothered, whereupon Hijiri showed a soft smile and gently clung onto my arm.
“With that, you won’t get wet.”
“Yeah, and it’s warm. Thanks.”
I felt a gentle warmth on my arm. This warmth moved my heart and unable to hold them back, my feelings overflowed.
“…Hey Hijiri, can we go home like this again? Talking together, playing with everyone, going out somewhere… Can we be together like before?”
Words filled with my feelings.
Hearing that, Hijiri suddenly stopped and after a long silence, in which she was thinking about something, she bit onto her lips and looked down, saying quietly.
“…Thank you for everything up till now, Shinobu-kun.”
The words Hijiri said sounded teary and a bad feeling befell my chest.
“Thank you for not getting scared of me. Thank you for helping Kaoru-san. Thank you for calling someone like me ‘cute’.”
Tightly hugging onto my chest like on a bitter farewell, Hijiri trembled her voice.
“I was happy that you petted my head. You always told me the words I wanted to hear. You’re really warm. But, I…”
Her greatly trembling voice came to a small standstill.

“—I can’t stay at your side, Shinobu-kun.”

Along with these words, Hijiri’s voiced started to get filled with sobbing.
“If I stay by your side like this, I’ll surely cause you troubles. I don’t want that. I don’t want to trouble you by pushing my selfishness onto you again. That’s why I can’t… stay by your side anymore.”
Along with these sad words… the warmth vanished from my arm.

“I’ll be fine. I have Kaoru-san. I can handle things myself. The person you want to protect is Luna-san, right? You can’t concern yourself with the selfish me any more than this.”
“Hijiri—”
“Stay away!”
Hijiri denied the hand I reached out with a voice filled with tears.
“It’s okay. I really will be fine. You don’t need to concern yourself with me. You have a lot of charming people around you. You’ll be fine, even without me.”
…The cold rain poured down on Hijiri, who got away from the umbrella.
With no time to confirm whether the water on her cheeks were rain drops or tears,
“Bye, bye, Shinobu-kun.”
Hijiri turned her back to me and rushed away alone.
My extended hand hung in midair and I was unable to chase after her back. From that day on, Hijiri completely separated herself from me…

Chapter 04: Tied Strings of Bonds

—An exorcists or a devil, that doesn’t matter to me. For me, you, Luna and Machina are just cute girls. And there’s no need to be scared of such.
The words Shinobu-kun once told me.
The smile he showed me.
Even now they remained in my heart without fading.
In the car Kaoru-san was driving, I remembered Shinobu-kun’s words and smile while I watched the quiet and dark street through the window.
…Back then, I was really happy.
As a kid, I wanted to help my precious friend and showed my exorcist powers, whereupon she cried with “Monster” while looking at me.
Weird rumours spread at school, I became alone and I thought it would

turn out like this again if I ever showed my powers again.
But Shinobu-kun was different.
Actually I was somewhat prepared for it when I showed my powers in front of him.
But Shinobu-kun tried to protect Luna-san, even though she was a devil, and wasn't the least bit scared of me.
I found it strange and it weighted on my mind, so at some point my eyes were chasing him. Everyone was saying he was a scary person, but I noticed that he was actually kind and felt that he resembled Kaoru-san a bit… I wondered when it was that I fell in love with him?
"…It was the first time a boy called me cute…"
His behaviour to hide his red cheeks when embarrassed.
His big, warm hand that petted my head.
The gentle smile he suddenly showed.
I found all of that lovely. On days I could see him, I was happy and on days I couldn't, I was always thinking of him.
Therefore I noticed right away that he had feelings for Luna-san, by observing his attitude, speech and conduct. But I couldn't give up. I troubled him by pushing my selfish dream on him. I… made my beloved person sad.
The other day, when thunder was echoing, Shinobu-kun came to pick me up out of worry and wanted to stay friends with me, yet… I could only shake off his kindness.
The hand he extended was kind of shaking and the lips he bit onto, enduring something, just looked sorrowful…
But if I stayed at his side like this, I was sure that I would act spoiled towards him again, bother him and cause trouble… If that continued, I believed that he would come to hate me some day.
That would be by far more painful.
But, actually…
At some point tears were seeping out. When I wiped them away secretly, Kaoru-san, who was driving the car, said isolated.
"…Hijiri-chan, could you decrease your workload a little bit?"
Suddenly facing me, Kaoru-san knit her brows worried.
"You are running for the student council election, right? You are already

busy as it is and if you increase your exorcist jobs any more than this, your body will break down."
"Sorry, Kaoru-san. It's better that way now."
By getting busy, I could forget a lot of things.
"Besides, I have to accomplish achievements while I can."
"…Is that for Shinobu-sama's sake?"
"It's for you as well."
Not denying it in particular, I forced myself to smile.
I certainly was thinking of changing the exorcist organisation to make them acknowledge Kaoru-san as my family. But that wasn't all to it. It involved Luna-san and Machina-san too. But Shinobu-kun didn't have to know about that.
…I could no longer be with him, but I said I would be on his side. I told him that I would support his relationship with Luna-san.
I guess Shinobu-kun would be happy about being able to stay with everyone? Even if I wasn't part of it, even if I couldn't see that beloved smile anymore, as long as he is happy… That alone was happiness for me too.
"Hijiri-chan."
Kaoru-san suddenly raised a trembling voice that cut into my thoughts.
"Why are you separating yourself from Shinobu-sama? Shinobu-sama is treating both you and me preciously. He even allowed us to be by his side. Yet… Why? I am certain that Shinobu-sama will be saddened…"
"He'll be fine without me. He has Luna-san with him. I'll only cause troubles by staying at his side. It would be just my selfishness. Besides, I still have you, right? That's enough for me."
Even while speaking out these words, Shinobu-kun's gentle smile floated in my head.
"…No good."
On that day, when Elni's magic trick failed and I was handcuffed to Shinobu-kun, he properly told me that he loved Luna-san.
Despite that, I wished to remained handcuffed. I got the feeling that I could stay by his side while still handcuffed and that he would allow it…
"Really, it's no good…"
I knew I had to wake up from the dream already and that it shouldn't

happen, yet I couldn't hold back my overflowing tears and the cold drops ran down my cheek while a weeping left my mouth…

* * *

Let's stay friends— Could have the current result been avoided, if I had said these words clearly?
In the last few days, my relationship with Hijiri had returned to simple classmates. Meanwhile Hijiri was surrounded by students like always and I couldn't enter that circle.
Besides, the fact that Hijiri rejected my extended hand amidst the rain a few days ago tightened my chest and unable to get her sad expression from that time out of my head, I got the feeling that I would hurt her again if I was near her, so today again I went to school with heavy steps without having come up with words to tell her.
After separating with Machina at the classroom, I absent-minded watched the cloudy sky from the window in the hallway until classes started.
At that time, I suddenly spotted Hijiri, surrounded by students as always, in the corner of my vision.
When she noticed me, she smiled incredible gentle, but that expression just looked so sad. Like always I searched for words to tell her, whereas she continued her chit-chat with the other students and disappeared into the classroom like that…
What grazed my head was the innocent smile she showed before.
The brilliant smile when she rushed over to me right after separating from the others.
Her dignified eyes that charmed me every time.
All of these might never be directed at me again.
…Would our relationship end like this and Hijiri turn into a simple stranger? Would the pain I was feeling in my chest vanish at some point?
If the regret and sadness vanished without a trait some day and even my memories ended up fading away, that would be really…
There I returned to the classroom and then thought about such things

during class, so before I noticed it, it was lunch break.
Today Asada and Minami gathered at Machina and my desks and while we all were eating our lunch, everyone without exception leaked a sigh in succession, filling the air around me with sad sighs.
“Hah…” from me.
“Fuh…” from Machina.
“Aww…” from Asada.
“Oh no…” from Minami.
Hearing these voices, everyone grew even more gloomy and I sighed again.
“Hah…” from me.
“Fuhn.” from Asada.
“Yahn.” from Minami.
“Noo” from Asada.
“Iyahn” from Minami.
For some reason, Asada and Minami leaked bewitching voices from midway on, continuing even further.
“Uhn, not, there.”
“Me too, Ahn, can’t take it, there.”
“Stop, Uhn, already, Ahh, Orangelo-san.”
“Kyaa, please, don’t tease me, my Queen.”
“Fufu, for saying ‘stop’ and ‘don’t tease me’ you both look rather happy. Fine. I’ll tease you some more— wait, no! Why are you both leaking weird voices! Besides, why are you saying my name! Minami even said Queen!”
“I mean, Nanjou just isn’t retorting and not even paying attention to me, so I’m lonely. You’re the only one left, Orangelo-san…”
“Same for me. Shinobu-chan isn’t showing any reactions, I recently don’t get the change to eat with Gogyou-san, Shinobu-chan feels down lately and Gogyou-san isn’t in the classroom during breaks since she’s busy, so you’re the only one I can go to for attention, Orangelo-san.”
Asada and Minami each leaked these words and looked at me slightly worried. But when he saw my non-reaction, Asada shrugged his shoulders lightly and changed the topic.
“But I gotta say, a lunch break without Gogyou-san sure is painful.

Usually I had her smile as a side-dish… wait, I'm just joking, so don't glare at me, Orangelo-san, Minami. But well, Gogyou-san is running for the student president election, so there's nothing we can do."
"Student president? Hijiri is?"
As she didn't know, Machina faintly widened her eyes on Asada's words, whereupon Minami dropped her shoulders and explained.
"You see, Gogyou-san was asked by the current president to succeed the position. She told me about it the other day… but I'm against it. I can't play with her at all and she's a bit weird lately."
Along with a sigh, Minami frowned faintly.
"Guess it's because she's busy? She herself might think she's behaving like always, but as a friend I can tell that's she's somewhat absent-minded even in class. I think she's forcing herself a bit."
"…She lacks her usual composure."
Hearing Minami, Asada interjected with an unusual serious face.
"From what I can tell, she's forcing herself. Gogyou-san is pretty and has a strong sense of responsibility, so she's admired by everyone, but she might not have anyone she can rely on at harsh times. But…"
With still a serious expression, Asada suddenly faced me.
"Nanjou, wouldn't you be able to help her, since you two were together a lot?"
Asada's soft tone strongly tightened my chest.
When I was at a loss for words and didn't reply, Asada scratched his cheek lightly, then tried to change the topic somewhat awkwardly
"Ehm, well, you know, your troubled face is rather cute, Nanjou. Can I kiss it?"
by cracking one of his usual jokes.
Upon hearing Asada's joke, Minami raised a protesting voice right away.
"K- Kiss him… What are you thinking, Asada-kun! Don't do anything weird to Shinobu-chan! I'll be the one to kiss him!"
"Hey! Same to you, Minami, what are you thinking! Get away from Shinobu!"
Minami tried to hug onto me. Machina hastily stopped her. As for Asada, he kept telling jokes to lift the gloomy atmosphere and both,

Minami and Machina each retorted to it.
…Surely they were all concerned about me.
Their behaviour that was more lively than usual seemed like they wanted to make the depressed me laugh and while I watched their faces, my chest got a little bit lighter.
Before I noticed it, I was spilling a small smile and spent a somewhat nice lunch break with that lively atmosphere….

The chime tolled the end of the break and our homeroom teacher Hiiragi Akane showed up, whereas Hijiri was absent from the classroom for some reason and even now her seat remained empty.
When Hiiragi-sensei tilted her head upon noticing that, everyone in class seemed to notice Hijiri's absence as well and a small commotion rose in the classroom.
"…What happened to Gogyou-san?" "So she isn't back yet." "I heard that she collapsed in the hallway at the end of lunch break." "…For real?" "I didn't know at all." "Is Gogyou-san okay?" "Seems she's resting in the infirmary now."
…Hijiri collapsed?
I faintly heard the conversation of my classmates. Bit by bit, worry spread in my chest and when I grimaced, Machina placed her hand on my shoulder with a plop.
"Shinobu, if you're worried, why don't you go check upon Hijiri? I'll properly take notes for you."
"…Thanks, please do."
When I stood up by saying so, Hiiragi-sensei looked at me doubtful.
"Nanjou-kun, what's the matter?"
"I feel bad, so I'm going to the infirmary."
"Eh? Then should I accompany you?"
"No, I'll manage."
"But from what the other says, Gogyou-san also seems to be— wait, Nanjou-kun?"
I heard Hiiragi-sensei's confused voice behind me, but I rushed out of the classroom guilty, down the hallway. Following, I went down the stairs and opened the door of the infirmary hurried.

There was the nurse in her white coat. Seeing me, she faintly frowned.
"…Full of energy, aren't we. I could hear your running all the way here. Are you skipping?"
"Well, in a way I am, but I heard that Hijiri collapsed…"
"Hijiri? Ahh… You mean Gogyou-san. She's sleeping on a bed right now, but are you a friend of hers?"
"I consider myself one."
"I see, then that's good."
When I nodded without hesitation, the nurse quietly stood up from her chair.
"Earlier I called her home and her older sister will come to pick her up. But I have to drop by the staff room for a bit and also tell her homeroom teacher Hiiragi-sensei about it, so could you look after Gogyou-san for a while?"
Most likely Hijiri's older sister meant Kaorun. When I responded affirmative, the nurse waved her hand lightly with "If someone comes by in the meantime, tell them to wait until I'm back" and left the infirmary.
After seeing her off, I moved to the back of the room, whereupon I could confirm Hijiri sleeping on a bed there.
She certainly must have been unwell. Her complexion didn't look well and her sleeping face had a faint weariness. And while breathing painfully,
"…Shinobu-kun."
Hijiri isolated leaked my name from her mouth, as she was sleep talking, and tears dwelled up in her closed eyes.
I hated that I couldn't do anything despite that, so I just bit onto my lips and clenched my fists.
At that time, the door of the infirmary opened and a somewhat pale Kaorun showed up, as she came to pick up Hijiri. When she noticed me, her expression softened and she smiled while quietly coming over to me.
"You were staying by her side, I see."
"…Just for a bit. Sorry. I only came to know about it minutes ago."
"Nevertheless, you slipped out of class and came to check on Hijiri-chan, correct? Thank you. I am sure Hijiri is pleased about that too."

Lightly bowing down, Kaorun moved toward Hijiri… and right away her expression clouded. For a while she kept her mouth shut then, but she slowly started to leak words with hesitation.
"…The other day, Hijiri-chan told me that you rejected her. Not complaining, nor shedding tears, she just smiled and said 'I'll trouble Shinobu-kun, so I have to separate myself from him'. She kept hiding her true feelings… What a troublesome girl."
While saying so, Kaorun gently placed her hand against Hijiri's cheek.
"Actually even Hijiri-chan should be wishing for staying at your side if only as friends. But mostly likely the rejection struck her hard."
While petting Hijiri's head, Kaorun frowned and continued.
"As far as I can see, she thinks that she will end up crying and troubling you when she stays by your side, so she is keeping herself busy to forget you and took it upon herself to take a distance, but she noticed that doing so was painful for you… and it became unbearable for her."
Even while spinning her words softly, tears were faintly dwelling up in her eyes.
"She must be thinking of doing something for, paying you back or at least support you from the shadows. Lately she kept increasing her exorcist jobs."
"Exorcist jobs too? Even though she already has the election… Why?"
"Hijiri-chan strongly forbid me to speak about this, but actually—"
Before Kaorun could continue her words there, the door opened once again and this time the nurse showed up together with Hiiragi-sensei, whatever happened to the class.
Upon that, Kaorun secretly brought her face closer to mine.
"Shinobu-sama, please leave Hijiri-chan to me."
Changing her words, she whispered quietly.
"I promised you the other day, remember? I will give my best to allow you two to get back to your previous relationship. Please wait a bit longer."
Saying so and somewhat forcing a smile, Kaorun parted from me and headed for the teachers. After a simple greeting then, they started to talk. When I listened to it, the nurse spoke about her own diagnose "Gogyou-san likely collapsed due to fatigue." and Hiiragi-sensei apparently had

turned the class into self-study. While I carried Hijiri on my back to Kaorun's car after that,
"I hope Gogyou-san will get better quickly…"
Hiiragi-sensei, walking besides Kaorun, showed a worried expression with that from the beginning to end.
After seeing off Kaorun and Hijiri leaving the school in the car then, I returned to the classroom with heavy steps together with Hiiragi-sensei.
On the way— I suddenly raised my face to the sky.
…Kaorun told me that Hijiri was increasing her exorcist workload, because she wanted to do something for me. But in the end, I couldn't figure out how the exorcist jobs were paying me back.
What should I do from now on? Should I take Kaorun up on her words and simply wait?
What I truly wanted to do.
The feeling in my chest.
Probably because I averted my eyes from my own dream, even though I had a wish I wanted to come true, the sky in my vision looked incredibly clouded, just like this morning…

* * *

During the next few days, I couldn't sleep well.
Regardless of her collapse at school, Hijiri didn't lower the amount of her jobs and lately the fatigue in her expression became obvious.
Everyone in class was worried too, but Hijiri just created a smile with "I'm fine" and immersed herself into even more work without lending an ear… I couldn't do anything for her.
Even now Hijiri's words of rejection skimmed through my head. They weighted down my heart and feet and the days went on while I simply waited like Kaorun told me to.
Then one day after school.
When I reached our home road with Machina like always, she started talking somewhat sad on this quiet residential street.
"Even though she was with you so often, lately Hijiri isn't coming over at all…"

Temporarily stopping her words and looking at me, Machina continued hesitant.
“I guess you rejected her confession?”
When I replied with a small nod to that question, Machina asked even further.
“You can’t stay friends with her?”
Machina’s eyes, looking at me, were faintly flickering. But when I replied nothing back, she cast her face down and mumbled with a sigh.
“…Humans are so complicated. The demon realm has polygamy, so you can stay with your beloved ones forever…”
Can stay with your beloved ones forever.
For some reason these words remained in my heart and at some point we both closed our mouths and resumed heading for the house wordless, whereupon I suddenly spotted a familiar woman at the crossroad we passed through.
That person was Tachibana-san, who was the observer for Hijiri’s previous exorcist test.
When Tachibana-san noticed us, she made a single bow with refined movements. I lowered my head a bit then as well, whereupon she called out to me with a small, but obvious wondering voice.
“Excellent timing. I was just on my way to meet you, Nanjou-dono.”
“Me? You need something?”
“Yes. Well…”
After pausing her words faintly, Tachibana-san showed a complex expression.
“In place of Hijiri-sama, I will be instructing you about the exorcist training from today on, Nanjou-dono.”
“You will? Why so suddenly?”
“…Hijiri-sama personally asked me to. She is circumvented at present. The amount of her exorcist jobs increased compared to before and she is working hard to raise her position as an exorcist. I believe… it is for your sake, Nanjou-dono.”
For me? When I was confused about the unexpected words, Tachibana-san shifted her gaze to Machina and opened her mouth again after a short hesitation.

“Nanjou-dono, you are not aware about how much effort Hijiri-sama puts into making the organisation acknowledge devils and hybrids devils, like the one next to you, right?”
With a serious tone, Tachibana-san told me so, albeit a bit hesitant.
“The exorcist organisation still takes a cautious stand against devils, like the one at your side. It is more than likely that the exorcists will make their move upon an incident. Hijiri-sama fears that and is exerting all of her powers to prevent that by all means.”
I knew nothing of that.
Until now, Hijiri had always protected Luna and the others from the shadows. Even after taking her distance from me, she continued to…

—Shinobu-kun, would you be happy if you can stay with Luna-san and the other from now on?

—Then I’ll try even harder at my job.

—I’m sure it’ll be fine when you tell Luna-san your feelings. It’ll definitely go well. I’ll… support you. I’ll make them… accept you two. From now on, I’ll always… always… be on your side, Shinobu-kun…

Suddenly many words that Hijiri had said so far floated in the back of my mind.
Try harder at the job.
Support.
Make them acknowledge.
Understanding the true meaning of these words at this point, my chest got incredible hot and my clenched fists trembled.
Amidst that, Tachibana-san softly clapped my shoulder without saying anything more, then slowly walked away, whereas Machina for some reason bit down on her lips and cast down her face again…

* * *

After returning home, I forgot to train my body and even during dinner and after my bath, my sleep derived mind continued to think… about

Hijiri.
But no matter how much I pondered, my anguish didn't vanish and I absent-minded stared at the ceiling of my room to give my thoughts a break while sitting on my bed.
Upon that, a small knock on the door sounded
"Shinobu-san, do you have a moment?"
and along with these words, Luna showed up in the room.
When she looked at my face, she showed a slightly worried expression, but she still approached me and sat down next to me.
"…Lately, you look a bit down, Shinobu-san. As I thought, something happened? If anything is troubling you, I can listen to you."
Opening her mouth reserved, Luna showed me her usual smile. While I was hesitant to take her up on her words, Luna softly and gentle overlapped her hand with mine.
"The other day, when we were together on my way home from my job, you told me: 'If you feel like grumbling, I'll listen to you anytime'. I feel the same. If you want to talk, I will listen anytime. It does not need to be now, if you do not want to talk about it. Please let me hear it when you feel like talking."
Even while knitting her brows worried, Luna didn't break her smile.
My heart was moved by her feelings and warmth of her hand.
"…Hijiri is forcing herself these days."
Before I noticed it, my heavy lips had opened.
"She collapsed once at school, yet she increases her exorcist jobs, even though she's already busy with the student council election. She keeps forcing herself… and always looks so strained."
"You cannot help her?"
"…Due to some stuff, there's a distance between us now. To be honest, I don't know if it's okay for me to be by her side."
I squeezed out the words along with grinding my teeth. They echoed in the empty room and after a short while,
"…What do you want to do, Shinobu-san?"
Luna lightly increased the strength in her palm on my hand.
"Are you fine with giving up like this and letting go of something precious?"

Luna continued her words with a soft, yet strong voice.
“I do not want you to give up. I do not want you to regret having done nothing. It might not turn out well even when you advance without giving up. It might get harsh or painful. Despite that, I want you to advance in whatever form.”
After looking straight into my eyes, Luna tightly embraced me.
“Whatever the result will be, I will be on your side. So please, do not give up. You will surely regret it when you turn your back to your feelings.”
…Luna’s words and body were really warm and my hesitation gradually faded.
But a faint bit remained in my chest. Even after Luna left the room, I couldn’t get rid of it and I stared at my cell phone on the desk, whereupon

“Good evening, Shinobu-sama.”

I suddenly heard Kaorun’s voice, if only quietly.
It was the alarm clock she previously gave me. I didn’t remember setting the alarm, but I could hear a different voice than before from it.
“I know it was rude of me, but I allowed myself to trespass into your room today. I recorded this at that time. I am conducting remodelling right now, so it will take a few minutes, but let me be frank…”
There her words temporarily stopped and after a long silence,

“…Please help Hijiri-chan.”

Kaorun’s horrible trembling voice hit my earlobes.
“Forgive me. I promised to help you about letting Hijiri-chan stay by your side, regardless of your answer, and asked you to wait, yet… I could not do anything in the end.”
Speaking out words of apology once more, her voice started to tremble even more.
“Hijiri-chan does not listen to whatever I have to say and I assume that she cannot give up and forget you, yet she keeps increasing her workload while ignoring the state of her body and gets injured. At this

rate, one day…”
Finally her voice started to mingle with sobbing, but Kaorun continued while suppressing it.
“Hijiri-chan is certainly popular at school. She has a lot of people around her. But she has no one to support her. Others only ever rely on her. Therefore Hijiri-chan behaves dignified and helps everyone. Amongst that…”
Slowly, her words afflicted my chest.
“You were the first one, Shinobu-sama, who Hijiri-chan pursued and fawned on. It is frustrating, but… with my strength alone… I cannot help Hijiri-chan. I beg you, please stay by her side. She is going out for a job tonight again. The destination is—”
After that Kaorun’s voice told me where Hijiri had a job tonight and before the room became silent again— I rushed outside.
Hijiri always engulfed everyone with her dignified kindness. Everyone relied and admired her, but just who would be there for her when she was suffering?
When Kaorun were her only support and Hijiri only relied on her, then I couldn’t stay still.
My running speed gradually increased.
My head was full of Hijiri.
Hijiri kept working hard to change the exorcist organisation to make them acknowledge Kaorun as her family, thus fulfilling her promise with her.
At the sea side school, when I observed her fieldwork, Hijiri’s family circumstances were exposed to Minami and even now Hijiri showed an expression close to tears.
…Just when did I start thinking that I wanted to help Hijiri?
The more I got to know about her, the greater got my feeling to help her and it was surely the sports festival that completely stabilized that feeling.
On that day, Hijiri took the hand of Kaorun, who tried to leave the family, and held it firmly. Kaorun and Hijiri wanted to change the exorcist organisation from the bottom of their hearts.
When I witnessed their dream becoming one on that day, I certainly felt

the desire to see their dream realized.
It gave birth to a new dream inside me.
I couldn't afford to let go off this dream now and let it vanish after giving up.
The overflowing feelings in my chest pushed me forward and running through the dark city at night, I headed for the place Kaorun told me while breathing hard. When I spotted the two of them there, I was at a loss for words for a short moment.
Under the light of the moon and streetlights, Hijiri was leaning on Kaorun's shoulder and there were various bruises on her legs and arms while blood seeped through her bandages, wounds she probably received during her job. Her expression was powerless and the usual dignified radiance was nowhere to be seen.
…Why did I keep averting my eyes until it came to this?
When Hijiri noticed me, she showed the same incredible gentle smile like before, then shifted her gaze to Kaorun.
"Did you call over Shinobu-kun, Kaoru-san?"
"…I believed it was necessary for you."
Replying so, Kaorun softly separated herself from Hijiri.
On the other hand, I straight went for Hijiri. My chest was filled with various feelings I wanted to tell her. Looking into her eyes, I quietly started talking.
"I heard from Tachibana-san. You were always protecting Luna and Machina so far. And I also heard from Kaorun that you're forcing yourself."
"…I see. They both spilled the beans."
Even while leaking a faint sigh, Hijiri continued with a "But" without changing her expression.
"I'm not forcing myself. Luna-san and Machina-san are my friends, so doing this much is only natural. Besides, I need more achievements to change the exorcist organisation. It's nothing for you to worry about, Shinobu-kun. This job is necessary for me."
"Still, you don't need to take it up on your own."
"Thanks for worrying about me. But I'll be fine. Don't worry."
"…Even if you're okay, I… can't bear it."

Like always, Hijiri's smile was just affixed.
I couldn't bear seeing that forced smile while she clenched her fist and was desperate to support herself.
"Repeatedly pushing yourself until you're that injured and smiling sadly like that… I can't leave you alone like that. I always had difficulties, but I have decided now."
Adjusting my slightly grazed voice, I clearly told her my feelings.
"Whatever happens from now on, I'll support you. I'll help you. I'll continue to protect you. I won't ever take my eyes off you again."
"…What, are you saying? You can't, Shinobu-kun. The one you want to protect isn't me, but Luna-san, right? You can't concern yourself with me."
"Hijiri, I'm not aiming to be an exorcist for Luna's sake, but because I want to see the moment your and Kaorun's dream comes true together with you. I definitely will become an exorcist and support your dream."
"Becoming an exorcist… for that kind of reason… is ridiculous. Your wish is… to stay together with Luna-san, right? I'll do something about Luna-san and Machina-san. Therefore, you… don't have to… become an exorcist…"
"Whatever you say, I don't plan to change my mind. Even if you take your distance from me, even if you reject me numerous times, even if you come to hate me, I'll help you. Like you did for me, I'll continue to support you from the shadows."
"…I'm far weaker from what you think."
Along with a trembling voice, her fabricated expression gradually changed into a crying face.
"I'm sure it'll be really tough to support me."
"Leaving you alone is even tougher."
"I might act really spoiled towards you?"
"I don't mind."
"I might cry in front of you when I'm in pain."
"Then I'll be by your side until you stop crying."
"…I might… cause you a lot… of troubles…"
"I'll accept all of it."
"You might… come to… hate…"

“That will never happen.”
I asserted her firmly and spun my feelings.
“Act spoiled and cry all you want, I won’t consider it troubles. I’ll never come to hate you.”
I reached out my hand that was rejected once towards Hijiri without hesitation.
“I told you, whatever happens from now on, I’ll continue to support you. So, don’t cry by yourself. Don’t get hurt by yourself. You don’t have to shoulder everything by yourself. From now on, you can rely on me.”
“…Thank… you…”
Smiling fragile, Hijiri repeated “Thank you”.
“I was… no good without you. I didn’t notice my own weakness, kept forcing myself and made Kaoru-san worry and sad. But, with you by my side, I’ll be fine…”
While spilling big tears from her eyes, Hijiri wrapped up my hand with both her hands.
“I want to you to help us with our childish-like dream of changing the exorcist organisation.”
“Yeah, until the end. Your dream is mine too. Let’s realize that dream… together.”
“Yeah… Yeah… I want to support you too. I’ll give my best so that Luna-san and the others can stay by your side. So, please stay by my side too.”
“…With you by my side, there’s no longer anything to be afraid of.”
Sentimental words.
Tears overflowed from Hijiri’s eyes without end and she raised a small crying voice, clinging to me like that. And I softly embraced her warmth on my body.
As to connect the unravelled strings of our bonds with my own warmth, I tightly, but gentle embraced her closely for good.
Amidst that, Kaorun, in the corner of my vision, had warm tears flowing down her cheeks just like Hijiri while she watched over us….

* * *

The somewhat bright lights of the houses were visible from the car window. Kaorun sat on the driving seat in the peaceful inside of the car. Hijiri was on the passenger seat. As for me, I leaned my back into the backseat.
After finishing my talk with Hijiri, Kaorun said she would drive me back home, so I got into the car on her urges, but for a while now my eyelids were heavy, as I didn't get much sleep lately.
While rubbing my eyes for the time being, I fought against the sleepiness, but at some point my consciousness faded and the conversation between Hijiri and Kaorun grew distant.
"I must say, I am really glad. Now you can always stay by Shinobu-sama's side."
"Yeah, it's thanks to you, Kaoru-san. Thanks. Also, sorry for worrying you. Are you willing to support me from now on as well?"
"I intended to do so from the beginning. After all, I am your older sister. You can call me 'Kaoru-oneechan' if you want."
"…Kaoru-san, how about I postpone that for after we realized our dream? I think it's a good motivation."
"Fufu, good idea. Let us work hard together."
Kaorun and Hijiri were talking happily like that… but I was done for. I was too sleepy. I wouldn't last until home…
"By the way, Hijiri-chan, it suddenly occurred to me, you and Shinobu-sama are now supporting each other, correct?"
"Yeah, that's right. It kind of makes me really happy."
"…However, supporting each other is already a deeper relationship than friends."
"Eh? Is that so?"
"Yes. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to call you his lover now."
"L- Lover!? Really!?"
"Yes, I believe Shinobu-sama will agree."
"Mhm~ But will Luna-san allow that?"
"I am sure she will— wait, Hijiri-chan!? Did you take me serious!? Just to tell you, I was joking about the lover part."
"…I hope Luna-san allows it."
"She is not listening!?"

I got the feeling that Kaorun was making some kind of ruckus and was doubtful, but I couldn't maintain my consciousness and fell asleep like that…

Epilogue

A slightly chilly morning. For some reason my bed was really warm today and a sweet fragrance was tickling my nasal cavity, moreover there was a soft sensation on both sides of my body.
…Could it be, someone snuck in?
Mhm~ Judging from the warmth at my sides, it seems that it were two people.
Well, probably Elni and Nazuna. It wasn't strange for them to snuck into my bed because it was cold. That might be okay on a holiday, but today was a school day. I should give them a proper warning.
Thinking so with my slightly vague mind, I opened my eyebrows, whereupon
"Ah, morning, Shinobu-kun."
I met Hijiri's eyes to my surprise.
…Was I still half-asleep? While I inadvertently doubted my own eyes, I became concerned about the other person on the bed and timidly shifted my gaze.
"Fufu, good morning, Shinobu-sama."
"I turned around and there's she!?"
"…Shinobu-sama, why do you only give that reaction to me? That is really rude. It hurt me a bit. Please kiss me as an apology."
"No, no, I'm sorry for that, but anyone would get surprised by that. What are you and Hijiri doing so early in the morning? Why are you here?"
Actually, wasn't this situation strange?
An unbelievable sleeping together with the two of them.
Hijiri's elastic and voluminous breasts. Kaorun's flexible and beautiful

breasts. I thoroughly felt the softness of their breasts and when I asked about the circumstances while agitated, Hijiri replied peacefully.
“Actually, after consulting with Luna-san, we’re taking turns in waking you up now. Yesterday it was Luna-san’s turn, so today it’s mine. There’s still a bit of time to spare, so you can still sleep, you know?”
“Please rest amidst our warmth, Shinobu-sama.”
“Uhm, I wouldn’t be able to sleep from the excitement though…”
My cheeks were certainly hot. But taking turns with Luna to wake me up, huh. One of my questions was cleared, but while straightening up my upper body, I faced Hijiri and spoke out my other question.
“Hey, I know that you came to wake me up, but why are you laying in bed with me?”
“That’s, ehm… Your sleeping face was so cute.”

“It just made you unintentionally feel naughty, like myself, right?”
“N- Not at all! Don’t group me together with you, Kaoru-san! I was certainly a bit excited, but Shinobu-kun looked cold, so, well, I just wanted to warm him up!”
“…Incidentally, Shinobu-sama, Hijiri-chan might be saying so, but until moments ago she was drooling spellbound while saying ‘Shinobu-kun’s sleeping face is so cute. I want to pet his head too’.”
“K- Kaoru-san! Stop! Don’t tell him that!”
Hijiri turned bright red at once. That behaviour was quite cute. While smiling faintly, I tried to get off the bed right away, but before that, Kaorun grabbed the sleeve of my clothes and raised a voice to stop me.
“Please do not run away, Shinobu-sama. I hope you will stand your man here. Please accept the fact that a lover or two are sleeping together with you with your big heart.”
“…Lover?”
Hearing Kaorun’s words, I tilted my head again.
I didn’t quite get it, but ever since the day I promised to support Hijiri, Kaorun frequently spoke out the word “Lover” and upon hearing that, Hijiri always blushed for some reason.
Not knowing the reason, I faced Kaorun with my head still tilted.
“Just for the record, I don’t have the finances to sustain a lover, you know?”
“I, I’ll earn the money, so no problem!”
Flushing her cheeks for some reason, Hijiri interjected at once. In regards, Kaorun giggled roguish and cracked an usual joke.
“Assuming that Hijiri-chan sustains Shinobu-sama, then it makes him a pimp. Engrossing himself in playing around with the money Hijiri-chan earned, he would do nothing but play pachinko and horse or boat races.”
“Hey, that’s rude. Who are you calling a pimp. Either way, if I became a useless guy like that, you‘ll surely stop me, right?”
“…I might enjoy pachinko together with you, Shinobu-sama.”
“Hey! Get a grip!”
“Calm down, Shinobu-sama, not taking my half-heartedness into account, there will not be a problem as long as you properly earn money, right?”

“…I might rely on you too for money.”
“Shinobu-sama! Please pull yourself together!”
“Well, calm down, Kaorun. my half-heartedness aside, there won’t be a problem as long you work properly, right?”
“Uhm, when you copy my line here, you perfectly sound like a pimp, you know?”
When we joked around like that, Hijiri giggling leaked a voice and looked at us softly… with a smile like a blooming flower.
“As expected, it’s fun with you, Shinobu-kun. Because we were apart, if only for a short while, I’m really happy now. Can I always stay by your side from now on?”
“…I can’t leave you alone after all. I’ll properly keep my promise. But well, you know… It’s about time I get changed, so could you two leave the room?”
I suddenly became embarrassed. Midway in my sentence, I averted my gaze to cover it up, whereupon Kaorun started to teasingly poke my cheek and Hijiri smiled with “You’re so cute, Shinobu-kun”.
—It was a little bit different morning from usual. My eyes fell on two precious existences. People I didn’t want to let go. Hijiri and Kaorun, who smiled radiant and beautiful while the morning sun showered them. I deeply desired to become even stronger than now, so that I could protect them forever and would never have to let go off them. Becoming strong enough to support them, that was my deep desire…

* * *

Lunch break at school. While the chit-chat of my classmates reached my ears, I saw Minami approaching me with her lunch box in her hand. Probably because Hijiri was busy lately, Minami, who usually ate lunch with her, enjoyed the lunch together with Machina and me these days. However, today Hijiri too surprisingly was following after Minami in my direction.
There Minami and Machina each tilted her heads puzzled.
“Huh? Gogyou-san, you have time for lunch today?”
“You have to prepare for the election, right? Can you waste the time?”

“Actually… I decided not to run in the election.”
Hijiri continued her words a bit awkwardly.
“Probably because I collapsed at school, the president and the others were kind of relieved when I told them my withdrawal. They said I shouldn’t worry about it. But I still feel bad, so I plan to help out as much as I can. So I might be busy for a while, but at least we can eat lunch together.”
“…You didn’t want to be president, Hijiri?”
Machina interjected doubtful, whereupon Hijiri shook her head a bit and replied.
“I once again noticed that there’s something more important than becoming president. I have my family job, club activities and…”
While faintly flushing her cheeks, Hijiri looked at me.
“I don’t want my time with Shinobu-kun decrease anymore.”
The moment Hijiri said so clearly, Minami showed an envious expression with “Somehow you two got even closer than before…” and Machina rested a hand on my shoulder with “Aren’t you glad you can be with Hijiri”, whereas Asada cried purposefully with “I’m happy too”.
…Mh? Wait a sec. When did the pervert appear?
While I was a bit surprised, Asada placed his hand on my other shoulder by mimicking Machina and changed his tone into a weird one for some reason.
“Nanjou, looking at your face, it seems like you got rid of your hesitation. Your eyes are no longer clouded. Guess my efforts paid off as well.”
“Hey, why are you sounding like an old man? And your efforts… Just what did you do?”
“Thanks for asking. I was about to leak a hazardous weeping if you had ignored me without asking.”
Stopping with his weird tone, Asada threw out his chest with pride.
“The last few days I kept working hard to weaken the influence of Gogyou-san’s fan club, so that you two can stay together. I asked my friends… to go around and specially show the junior girls photos or movies of you cross-dressing.”
“…How dare you?”

“Well, you see, it was more effective than I thought. There are lot of girls that enjoy your cross-dressing and some girls switched over from Gogyou-san to you, which perfectly weakened the fan club. Also, Katou was getting worked up over creating a fan club for you. I’m proud that my friend got so popular.”
“Hahaha, you’re such a hilarious guy… See me behind the school building later.”
“Not for a… love confession, I guess? I’m sure you want to beat the hell out of me. But if it’s you, I don’t mind! Do what you want!”
Asada wriggled his body disgustingly.
It was so bad that I inadvertently wanted to cover my eyes, but when I considered that he did it for my sake, I just couldn’t get angry.
“Asada… Thank you.”
Saying my thanks with a whisper, I let my gaze wander over everyone, whereupon Asada raised an overly lively voice with “I’ll eat together with Nanjou too!” and in the end the pervert joined our lunch time.
Amidst our chit-chat during the lunch, Asada opened his mouth with “Reminds me,”.
“You withdraw from the student council election, right Gogyou-san?”
“Yes, that’s right. Sorry…”
“No, no, there’s no need for you to apologize.”
When Hijiri showed an awkward expression again, Asada hastily shook his hand, then crossed his arms and frowned.
“But with Gogyou-san withdrawal, there are now just candidates with only diligence as their redeeming features, though we have to wait for the official announcement. I’m not one to say, but I’m not impressed. They’re all not suited for the president position.”
While speaking these words, Asada disgustingly rested his hand on my shoulder again.
“Hey Nanjou, why don’t you run for the position? If you show them your forte, the cross-dressing, all the girl’s votes should be yours.”
“…I really gonna smack you.”
When I glared at him lightly, Asada mumbled “It would be fun with you as the president though…” disappointed, then he suddenly looked at Machina and said abrupt with a serious expression.

“…Nanjou, what do you think of Orangelo-san as the president?”
“Eh? Me?”
While Machina widened her eyes, as her name was suddenly mentioned, Asada said with still a serious face.
“Orangelo-san is popular with the students, a beauty, a Queen and has charisma…Wouldn’t it work?”
“You casually called me a Queen just now, didn’t you? I’m not like that. And while I’m somewhat interested in the student council, someone like me surely won’t be elected.”
“Mh? That’s not true. I think you can pull it off.”
Machina dropped her shoulders unconfident. Resting my hand on her head, I showed a smile.
Just like Asada said, Machina was popular with the students. And she was surprisingly attentive. I believed she would look good on the stage as the student president and when I pictured it inside my head,
“If you’re up for it, Machina-san, then I’ll help too. I’m sure you’ll make a good president.”
“I agree with Gogyou-san. You’re kind, Orangelo-san. So you really will be a good president.”
Hijiri and Minami each nodded in agreement with me.
Upon that, our classmates curiously approached us, as they overheard us, “Orangelo-san is running for president?” “Then I’ll support you!” “I’ll give my full support too!” “I want Orangelo-san to become the president.” “And have her step on me.” “And scold me.” “Scorn me.” and all rooted for Machina with such warm words.
Well, there were some abnormal ones mixed in, but without her usual combination of getting tricked and then retorting, nor getting angry,
“…I’ll think about it.”
Machina quietly replied so somewhat sadly…

* * *

After school on the same day. I arrived on our home road together with Machina as always, but apparently she was thinking about something. While walking, she pressed her index finger against her cheek and

frowned faintly.
While watching that behaviour with a side-glance, I softly opened my mouth.
“Could it be, you’re pondering about running in the election?”
“…Yeah. It’s sounds interesting to be the student president. Besides, my sister started a part-time job to study about society, so I would like to join the student council as a kind of study too, but my election seems unlikely.”
“What, you’re not confident? If you plan to run for it, I’ll help you with all my might. I’ll make a cool campaign speech for you.”
“Don’t do magic tricks like Nazuna.”
“Leave it to me. I have an idea. It seems that Elni can play the guitar and Luna the piano, so I’ll take them to school and let them play at the campaign speech while I rock the house with my voice. And if you sing during your own speech too, it’ll be perfect.”
“I think outsider like Elni and my sister will be thrown out right away?”
…She didn’t give her usual tricked&retort combo today.
Apparently she was seriously pondering about it. I stopped my jokes and changed my tone into a serious one.
“Well, you can leave the campaign speech to Hijiri. I’ll work backstage. Let’s ask Asada for help too. He has a surprising amount of connections. I’m sure he’ll be helpful. And if we even add the class rep Katagiri-san and Minami, we’re all set. If everything goes well, you might get elected.”
“…That would be nice. I’m really interested in it. But…”
Suddenly stopping her feet, Machina faintly clouded her expression.
“The other day, my father replied with a letter on a rare occasion.”
Lightly biting onto her lips, Machina timidly looked into my eyes after a

short hesitation.